



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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99-141

Bishops model new style of 'respectful conversation' in dealing with issues

by James Solheim

(ENS) About 160 bishops of the Episcopal Church—joined by 140 spouses—met at a beach hotel on San Diego's Mission Bay for six days in mid-September and wrestled with skills for "respectful conversation" as a way of dealing with controversial issues.

"We hope we will become a community of wisdom rather than a body of reactions, seeing each other as carriers of wisdom," said Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold in an opening press conversation on September 16. Although the meeting was essentially closed, he said that it was "not meant to be secretive but to create a context in which people can speak frankly and deeply...to insure...graced conversation."

Bishop Charles Duvall of Central Gulf Coast pointed out that "spouses were incorporated into our lives more than ever before, lending their own wisdom and providing some helpful balance." He added that the interim meeting was intended to be "conversational, not legislative."

Under the general theme of "Jubilee Consciousness," sessions dealt with Patterns of Indebtedness, Re-ordering of Relationships, and Sexuality, Mutuality and Fidelity. Chaplains Margaret Bullit-Jonas and Jim Fenhagen helped to explore the biblical aspects of the theme, using the Gospel of Luke.

Under the leadership of Eric Law of Vancouver, an author and consultant on multicultural issues, the bishops and spouses moved from an exercise intended to develop skills for "graceful conversation" to a series of presentations on international debt, racism and sexuality, followed by small group discussions. "He helped us to hear and learn from each other, not just argue, so that we could move to wisdom on some issues," said Duvall.

"He urged us to deal with people as they really are, not as you think they are," said Bishop Chilton Knudsen of Maine. "Too often we deal with others based on a set of assumptions."

A presentation on world debt by Tom Hart, director of the church's Office of Government Relations, was "very encouraging" because it showed how the resolutions from the 1998 Lambeth Conference of the world's Anglican bishops has affected United States policy, said Duvall.

Hart told the bishops that, since Lambeth, there has been "tremendous progress" on the issue. "A worldwide movement is working to address this unpayable debt under the banner of Jubilee 2000, and is now active in 60 countries." Episcopalians have joined 40 other religious and development organizations to create Jubilee 2000 in the USA and "develop legislation to translate the vision of Jubilee into public policy." And the church's Peace and Justice Ministries program has created a booklet for congregational use on how they might participate in the Jubilee celebration.

Racism exposes raw nerve

According to Duvall and Knudsen, who served as press briefing officers for the meeting, the session on racism hit some very raw nerves. Bishops and spouses shared their own "moving, sad, almost angry" testimonies, Duvall said.

"They spoke of present as well as past experiences, in some cases with other members of the House," added Knudsen dealing with ethnically insensitive comments. "It

touched a chord of anger." Among the stories was one of shabby treatment of the wives of the church's black bishops when they visit white congregations.

"But we didn't have enough time to process such emotional issues," she said. As a result there was a frustratingly "unfinished" quality to the discussion.

"Illusions and complacency were smashed," added Duvall. And bishops set off some "alarms" in expressing concern about the loss of bishops of color and decreasing enrollment of ethnic minorities at seminaries.

The bishops adopted a resolution to reaffirm the "personal and diocesan commitment" to fight racism "in all of its demonic forms and expressions."

Receiving a witness

A panel of three homosexuals—a man in a relationship, another in a marriage and a mother now in a committed relationship—shared stories of how they came to grips with their sexuality.

"It was a very moving day," said Duvall. "There was no debate or discussion, we were just receiving their witness," with small group discussions at lunch. The group then heard a "helpful presentation from two theologians who had a conversation in front of us, modeling respectful conversation," followed by small group discussion.

Duvall said that people in his small group admitted that it was the first time that they had discussed the issue in any depth. He said that Philip Turner, retired dean of Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, expressed his deep concern that "how the church deals with the sexuality issue presents the greatest possibility of schism we have faced in many years."

The speakers seemed to be saying, "Show us a better way," said Knudsen. She described a different spirit emerging from the discussion, not as confrontative, based on efforts to "de-politicize" issues and the atmosphere in which they are discussed.

"If we do not receive a model from this house that is beyond the fractious patterns of the past, then we are without leadership," Knudsen said. "It's not an issue of who is right or wrong but how we will live together." Duvall added, "No one was asked to give up their positions—just deal with issues differently."

Bishop for Armed Forces elected

In the day set aside for necessary business, the bishops elected the Rev. George Packard of New York as suffragan bishop for the Armed Forces after eight ballots in a close race with the Rev. William Noble, who is an assistant in the office. Assuming consents from standing committees, Packard will be consecrated February 12, 2000, at Washington National Cathedral.

Packard is "a legitimate hero of the Vietnam War, with two Bronze Stars and a Silver Star for valor," said Bishop Richard Grein of New York, who nominated him from the floor. In response, Packard said that "this extraordinary honor confirms a direction in my life first begun when I was a scared and bewildered recruit headed for Vietnam."

During a report to the bishops on the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, its executive director, Sandra Swan, said that the fund "has been busy" responding to a spate of tornadoes, earthquakes, civil strife and floods. She said that she is "thrilled with the generosity of Episcopalians" in responding, pointing out that church members contributed over \$3 million to the victims of Hurricane Mitch. For the first time the Fund has launched a project in its own name, building 95 houses, a clinic and community service facility in Honduras.

"The timing is good because the Fund is held in high regard" throughout the church and has "a great deal of visibility," said Griswold. He also hoped that this period of economic prosperity would encourage church members to share.

Herb Gunn of Detroit, president of Episcopal Communicators, described its members as "a very committed group of journalists who take their craft and take their vocation in the Episcopal Church very seriously... And we are proud that the Episcopal Church maintains a very, very strong reputation of supporting high standards of journalism."

Reporting on the decision by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to move toward full communion with the Episcopal Church, the Rev. David Perry, the church's deputy for ecumenical relations, said, "There is work to be done." He urged the bishops—and their dioceses—to study the document, "Called to Common Mission," a redraft of the original Concordat of Agreement that was passed by the General Convention in 1997 but narrowly failed to receive the two-thirds vote from the ELCA's Churchwide Assembly.

A new way of conversation

At a closing press conversation, bishops agreed that it had been an important meeting—and some credited the spouses with making a big difference. "The spouses humanized the meeting," said Charles Bennison of Pennsylvania, making us "more willing to share our woundedness." He is convinced that "a lot of surfaces have been scratched," and that the bishops moved to "new levels of compassion, sympathy and reluctance to label people according to their camps has emerged."

"That doesn't mean that we have avoided differences," added Chet Talton of Los Angeles. "We are not looking for easy answers but committed to continue the conversation until we come to a place where there is more of a consensus." He said that an important "shift" had taken place at the meeting—"moving deeper into the issue of racism with more acknowledgement of our complicity in the whole dilemma."

Claude Payne of Texas called it "a creative and powerful meeting. We are on the pathway to wellness, led by the Spirit to work together."

"We are just learning a new way of conversation," said Henry Parsley of Alabama, allowing an "experience of deeper communion in midst of differences" and engaging "real issues and complexities in a way that manifested our oneness."

Knudsen expressed a hope that "the day of passionate confrontation is passing," that it will be possible to "be together in differences, not sacrificing our convictions but simply calling them to be sources of richness, not fragmentation." She pointed out that during Jubilee the land, as it lies fallow, is "extremely busy because, in nature, the system is kept alive by diversity."

Catherine Roskam of New York said that she was aware that she wasn't alone, that "there were a lot of people in the room." She agreed with Griswold that respectful conversation "doesn't mean backing away from the issues, but instead looking for another road, moving forward in a different way."

Looking ahead to General Convention, Griswold said he hoped that what bishops experienced at the meeting "may be useful dioceses, inviting people to see if what the bishops have learned could be used on the diocesan level."

--James Solheim is director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church.

99-142

Hurricane Floyd's victims dig out and dry out

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) From the Caribbean to the Carolinas and beyond, millions have resumed their lives in the wake of Hurricane/Tropical Storm Floyd. With high winds and, worst of all, pounding and persistent rains, the storm soaked islands and then the East Coast in mid-September, leaving a legacy of death and injury, ruined homes and businesses, and despondence at so much lost.

And the rebuilding had barely begun when more rain—up to 8 inches—fell on North Carolina and tornadoes attacked the central part of the state on September 30.

Slowly, residents who were in the storms' path have begun clearing out the mud, drying out the furniture and putting their lives back together. Clearly it will take years to rebuild what one powerful storm destroyed in a matter of days.

After gathering its strength at sea, Hurricane Floyd made landfall on September 14 in the Bahamas.

While Hurricane Floyd only brushed the coast of Florida it wreaked havoc in the Bahamas according to Archdeacon I. Ranfurly Brown of the Diocese of Nassau and the Bahamas.

"The eastern edge of the 700-island commonwealth was especially hard hit," Brown told the Rev. Bob Libby during a visit to Miami, Florida. Communication between the bishop's office and much of the island diocese was cut off for several days. When they were able to survey the damage, said Brown, "It was catastrophic in many places. The only good news was that there was, miraculously, no loss of life."

"We don't need food and we don't need clothing," he stated. "What we need is money, building materials and volunteers with building skills." The Bahamian government has temporarily lifted all import taxes on building materials and immigration restrictions on skilled workers.

Storm in the Carolinas

After spreading damage across the Bahamas, Hurricane Floyd then slammed into the Carolinas, in the U.S.

Katerina Whitley, a North Carolina resident, reported that when Thursday morning, September 16, finally arrived after a night of fear, of wondering where the massive hurricane would strike, North Carolinians breathed a collective sigh of relief. Floyd hadn't packed Hurricane Fran's wallop (1996). Houses were standing. But further north the story was different.

The hundreds of creeks and streams of the east fed by the hardest rain in memory—20 inches in a couple of days—overflowed. Water spread on the cities of Kinston and Greenville, Rocky Mount and Tarboro, and roads became lakes. Cotton farms were covered, hog farms and enormous chicken sheds were invaded, and millions of animals drowned. Cars were swept away by the floodwaters.

By Monday, September 20, the water treatment plant in Greenville was contaminated. Sewage treatment plants were overflowing, animal carcasses were in the water, chemical contamination from the farms posed hazards that could not be boiled away. All schools were closed because of the floods; most were used as shelters. Thirty thousand homes, most of them belonging to people who are already poor, were lost under the muddy waters.

Becoming 'high ground'

After three days of welcomed sunlight, the rains began again. Spirits plummeted. It was the most depressing point of the aftermath. Governor James Hunt made an unprecedented appeal to all the citizens of North Carolina. He asked the people of the western part of the state who remembered the devastation of Hurricane Hugo 10 years ago to come to the aid of the people of East Carolina. "The people of East Carolina are at the low point of their lives," he said. "We must become their high ground."

Aid poured in. Helicopters passed overhead and their whirring sounds became as comforting to the hungry and the deserted as they have been in times of war to stranded soldiers. But that was overseas, not here. Suddenly, the people of peaceful eastern North Carolina were at war with the elements. Helicopters brought people to hospitals; they plucked them from rooftops and from threatening waters and took them to shelters in other towns.

Episcopal Parishes Respond

St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Ahoskie is in the northernmost part of the diocese. Betsy Overton, choir director and ECW president, explained, "We are the Red Cross Crisis Relief Center," adding spontaneously, "I am so proud of our church. We have had about 20 volunteers coming and going. Five of our own parish families have been affected by the floods."

Overton said that because of the lack of electricity she did not know immediately what was happening to the rest of the area. "I woke up this morning and started crying. I have not had proper awareness of what people go through in times of disaster. When electric power was restored I was in a state of shock. I saw a nightmare unfolding," she said.

The Church of the Advent in Williamston worshipped in the parish hall on Sunday because of the electrical hazard from water standing in the undercroft. But all the parishioners and the town considered themselves extremely fortunate. So they turned their attention to nearby Windsor, which had been an island of flooded buildings and farms for a week. As soon as the road became passable, the rector, James Horton, took \$2,000 in cash together with a thousand dollars' worth of cleaning supplies to St. Thomas, Windsor, and handed it to the Rev. Barbara Chaffee for the use of the community.

Elizabeth City, like Williamston, was spared the flooding. Christ Church organized relief for others, eventually aiding the fishing areas of Belhaven, Aurora, and to the Hispanic congregation of San Mateo. Dr. Fred Moncla, a retired medical doctor, and the Rev. Jim McGee of Christ Church turned their attention to the needs of 700 people who, already poor, lost what little they had.

E.T. Malone, Jr., spent time with several parishioners at Church of the Good Shepherd, Rocky Mount. Many told him they had escaped from their homes in predawn hours as Hurricane Floyd roared overhead on September 16, wading through chest-deep waters as the flooding Tar River covered their homes.

"We had to leave our house about 3:30 a.m. on Thursday," Cindy Peck recalled, "and go to the church for refuge." She and her husband and two teenaged children were among about 15 people who sought shelter at Good Shepherd, located in downtown Rocky Mount. "Some of our neighbors escaped in boats."

Joe and Judy Gallagher and daughter, Clare, were awakened at 5:30 a.m. by their dog's barking. They got out of their house with only the clothes on their backs, watching helplessly as their cars floated away and flood waters rose to their roof. The Gallaghers were taken in by friends.

Southern Virginia, overall, was dealt a relatively small blow since the storm stayed mostly offshore and increased its forward speed as it moved northward, reported Carlyle Gravely of Newport News, Virginia. However, coastal parts of the state was lashed by 12 to 20 inches of rain and winds that gusted as high as 75 miles per hour.

This came on top of several inches of rain from the long, slow visit by Hurricane Dennis at the end of August and the beginning of September, so Floyd's rain had nowhere to go except out over the plains that make up most of the eastern part of the Diocese of Southern Virginia.

In the city of Franklin and the adjacent Isle of Wight and Southampton Counties the Blackwater River rose at least 18 feet above flood stage. The entire downtown area of the city, including over 180 businesses and many homes, was flooded, sending several hundred people to evacuation centers.

Areas of New Jersey ravaged

Although it later was downgraded to a tropical storm, Hurricane Floyd moved steadily up the East Coast and ravaged areas of central New Jersey, causing the worst floods ever recorded, according to NevaRae Fox.

The hardest-hit communities were in Somerset County—Bound Brook, South Bound Brook, and Manville.

The Rev. Hewitt Johnston, interim rector of St. Paul's Church, Bound Brook, reported that the church's location on higher ground helped—the water stopped one block from the church building. His parishioners, however, were not so lucky; some lost everything they owned or suffered extensive damage to their property.

Johnston said the faith community, including the area Episcopal churches, immediately responded to the vast needs of the community through donations of food, clothing, and money. "There has been gratifying response from the diocese and neighboring churches of all faiths," he said.

Johnston added, however, that rebuilding efforts were under way. The first step was the formation of We Will Rebuild, Inc., he said, "an outgrowth of the faith community for people in Bound Brook, South Bound Brook, and Manville who cannot get help elsewhere."

Aid for storm victims

Coleen Stevens-Porcher of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief stated that an account had been established by the fund to receive donations for aid to the victims of Hurricane Floyd and that an initial emergency grant of \$15,000 had been wired to the Bahamas to assist in assessing the damage.

Emergency grants of \$25,000 each also have been made to the Dioceses of North Carolina, East Carolina, Southern Virginia and New Jersey.

Persons who wish to donate to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief special fund for Hurricane Floyd victims should send contributions to the fund at P.O. Box 12043, Newark NJ 07101. Donations should be marked specifically for Hurricane Floyd relief.

For information regarding volunteer construction workers for the Diocese of Nassau and the Bahamas, contact Archdeacon I. Ranfurly Brown at (242) 322-3015-7.

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church. This article is based on compiled reports from the Rev. Bob Libby of Key Biscayne, Florida, an author and religious journalist; Katerina Whitley, author and editor of *Lifeline*, a publication of the Presiding Bishop's Fund; the Rev. Canon E.T. Malone, Jr., director of communications for the Diocese of North Carolina; Carlyle Gravely, editor of *The Jamestown Cross*, newspaper of the Diocese of Southern Virginia; and NevaRae Fox, editor of *Via Media*, newspaper of the Diocese of New Jersey.

99-143

Charleston of EDS issues statement on violence against homosexuals

by James Solheim

(ENS) Bishop Steven Charleston, the new president and dean of Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) in Massachusetts, has issued a statement deploring violence against homosexuals and calling for agreement on human rights for all.

In asking other bishops of the Anglican Communion to join him in signing what he is calling the Cambridge Accord (text in Newsfeatures section), Charleston acknowledged that "we may have contrasting views on the biblical, theological and moral issues surrounding homosexuality," but might agree on three crucial points:

That no homosexual person should ever be deprived of liberty, personal property or civil rights because of his or her sexual orientation.

That all acts of violence, oppression and degradation against homosexual persons are wrong and cannot be sanctioned by an appeal to the Christian faith.

That every human being is created equal in the eyes of God and therefore deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

In a covering letter, Charleston said that "the global persecution of homosexuals has reached alarming proportions." He cited hate crimes in the United States, and public statements by African leaders in Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe "vilifying homosexuals with a claim to justification through the Christian faith. In one instance," he added, "homosexuality has been declared a crime punishable by life imprisonment." The Anglican church is strong in the nations where homosexuality has become an issue and "their bishops need our support in resisting this kind of misuse of the Christian faith," said Charleston.

Calming the passions of hate

He pointed out that "our church has been equally in the limelight as a community of faith struggling with issues of homosexuality," raising the possibility that the church

"perhaps inadvertently fanned the flames of some misguided and bigoted reaction. Therefore, the responsibility for us to calm the passions of hate become even more acute."

The Accord is "one effective way for us to make a shared witness, across all divisions of theological opinion, to stand united in our Anglican tradition of peace and the protection of human rights," Charleston concluded.

Copies of the Accord have been sent to the archbishop of Canterbury, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, the primate of Canada and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, with an appeal that they assist in circulating it to Anglican bishops around the world. "If we are successful with this simple effort, perhaps we can save innocent lives while the dialogue on homosexuality continues in peace and goodwill," he said.

The Rev. Brian Grieves, the church's peace and justice officer, noted the irony of the Anglican Consultative Council refusing to adopt a simple resolution from the Anglican Peace and Justice Network calling for human rights at its recent meeting in Scotland (see separate article). "Clearly, the resolution was not about an abstract issue but one that is life-and-death for many people all over the world," he said, "as represented by the threatening statements of some African leaders."

Charleston, former bishop of Alaska and chaplain at Trinity College in Connecticut, will be installed as president and dean October 15.

--James Solheim is director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church.

99-144

Lutherans sorting out impact of vote for full communion with Episcopalians

by James Solheim

(ENS) In the wake of the decision by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) approving full communion with the Episcopal Church, the church's presiding bishop met with opponents of the agreement and addressed their concerns.

Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson told a September 27 meeting of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod fall theological conference in Rochester that the decision was a "calculated risk" and he expressed his concern that people on both sides of the issue have hurt each other. But he said that he hopes "that as a church, we can forgive each other."

The ELCA passed the proposal, "Called to Common Mission," a rewrite of a Concordat of Agreement that the church narrowly rejected at its 1997 meeting after the Episcopal Church overwhelmingly approved it at the General Convention meeting in Philadelphia earlier.

Much of the controversy centers on the requirement that the Lutherans accept the "historic episcopate," with opponents charging that such a move compromises Lutheran identity, altering the role of bishops and diminishing the role of laity in the church.

"The passage of this places clergy and bishops at the center of this church," said the Rev. Julie Smith of Clarkfield, Minnesota. She said that CCM is "a betrayal" of her Lutheran heritage, and puts the church on "a course of increased hierarchy and less concern for the priesthood of all believers."

Another pastor reported "a lot of hurt in the parish I serve." The Rev. David Christiansen of Hutchinson said, "People are angry to the point where they are drawing up resolutions asking, 'How can we stay in the ELCA?'"

But the Rev. Nathan Lundgren of Foley said in response, "In the two parishes I have, I have not run into that deep hurt that others have expressed."

Living into new possibility

Anderson said that no rule requires "anyone to accept the historic episcopate," and that it is important "to talk with people about their conscientious objections and see how they can be alleviated." He said that nothing in CCM changes the structure of the ELCA, only the procedure is changed.

Anderson pointed out that the Episcopal Church was making commitments of its own, including the acceptance of Lutheran ordinations and the suspension of its rules that "no persons are allowed to exercise the offices of bishop, priest or deacon in this church unless they are so ordained, or have already received such ordination with the laying-on-of hands by bishops who are themselves qualified to confer Holy Orders."

Pointing out that the Episcopal Church will respond to CCM at its General Convention next summer in Denver, Anderson said, "It is important for us now to meet concerns and to find a way to live into this new possibility with the Episcopal Church."

Seminarians express concerns

In an earlier meeting at a church in St. Paul, Anderson responded to concerns from seminarians who wondered about the "nature of supervision" required by CCM.

Carol Nelson, a senior at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, said she wondered "if there is a place or need for me in this church." In response Anderson said that he would do "all I can to help seminarians. I want them to know that this is a church that welcomes them."

Anderson received kudos for the way he handled the difficult discussion at the Churchwide Assembly.

In discussion on an amendment to CCM that calls on synod bishops to "regularly ordain" seminary graduates, Bishop David W. Olson of the Minneapolis Area Synod said that it meant that bishops may not intentionally be absent from an ordination, allowing them to delegate their responsibility for ordinations only in extreme emergencies.

The Rev. Merlyn Satrom of St. Paul, a member of the team that wrote CCM, said that he was "disturbed that so few people have read the documents. 'We need to do our homework and do more reading.'"

Other participants expressed "distrust" with ELCA leadership. And the Rev. Jonathan Preus of Minneapolis said that he was worried about what will happen to seminarians and congregations who cannot accept CCM. He even suggested that some congregations might consider forming a non-geographic synod "where the historic episcopate does not exist."

Anderson said that he would be "attentive to those who found the decision to be distasteful," adding that "part of the work I'm doing is to hear clearly what those issues are. We took on a big job," he concluded. "This might be a way for us to learn how to live together."

--James Solheim is director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church. This article is based on reports by John Brooks, director of the ELCA News Service.

99-145

Lutheran bishop offers praise, caution in wake of CCM vote

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) Declaring that he is grateful that his church, after spirited debate, voted to enter into communion with the Episcopal Church, the head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America told an audience at Grace Episcopal Church in New York City that the ELCA's experience over two years in full communion with the Reformed churches has taught it to expect a wealth of possibilities in the new relationship.

"Jubilation is premature," ELCA Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson cautioned, noting that the Episcopal Church must approve the agreement at its General Convention next summer, but for the ELCA, "full communion has proved to be much more than another step on the path of Christian unity. It is more like a whole new highway."

Anderson's remarks came as part of the William Reed Huntington Memorial Sermon, delivered on September 15 during an annual Eucharist honoring Huntington, rector of Grace Church at the turn of the last century. The church was filled despite a heavy rainstorm that had pelted the area for hours preceding the evening service.

In addition to his 26 years of service to Grace Church, Huntington was the architect of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, approved by the House of Bishops in 1886 and still in use as the declaration of the official ecumenical position of the Episcopal Church. The document's listing of the historic episcopate as a necessary point to be included in the Episcopal Church's approach to unity with other Christians, has long been at the heart of Lutheran-Episcopal discussions.

The Lutheran Churchwide Assembly agreed to join Episcopalians in the historic episcopate when it approved the document—"Called to Common Mission"(CCM)—that opened the way for full communion.

"Over the last two years, Lutherans and Episcopalians have been seeking a way to honor that element in your tradition," Anderson said of the historic episcopate, "while also recognizing we Lutherans have no such structural requirement in our definition of Christian unity."

He pointed to the variety of ways in which Lutherans have organized themselves, never seeing their identity as bound to any single structure.

"Church structure was not an issue," he said of the Lutherans' relationships with three churches of the Reformed tradition and, most recently, the Moravians. "Once we agreed on matters of faith, we were able to move forward with full communion.

"The road to full communion with the Episcopal Church has not been that easy, although most Lutherans would see our two traditions as holding much in common. That is even true on the distinction between essentials and non-essentials," Anderson said. Put simply, Episcopalians see the historic episcopate as essential to Christian unity; Lutherans do not.

Lutherans' doubts came through in their vote against adopting the original "Concordat of Agreement" approved overwhelmingly by Episcopalians in 1997, he said, although Lutherans asked that a revised proposal be presented at their 1999 assembly.

CCM "clarified the question of the necessity of the historic episcopate," he said. He quoted from the document:

"The Episcopal Church is free to maintain that sharing in the historic catholic episcopate, while not necessary for salvation or for recognition of another church as a church, is nonetheless necessary when Anglicans enter the relationship of full communion... The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is free to maintain that this same episcopate, although pastorally desirable when exercised in personal, collegial, and communal ways, is nonetheless not necessary for the relationship of full communion."

Some of the implications of life within the historic episcopate, particularly questions about the installation of bishops, fueled an intense campaign against CCM during the months before its approval, Anderson said, recalling the tense days just before the final vote.

"It is significant to me that we finally got around to our Lord's own reason for praying that his followers might be one—'so that the world might believe'," he said. "That is why I am so grateful that our assembly did vote to approve 'Called to Common Mission.'"

The ELCA's experience with full communion with Reformed churches "has been full of discoveries. Time after time we have discovered ways in which our ministries can complement and support each other," he declared. "Beforehand we had talked of supplying vacant parishes and sharing expertise, but now we are talking about specific cooperation in dozens of program areas."

Moreover, the work surrounding CCM is not yet done, he added. Episcopalians must decide whether or not to accept it next summer, while Lutherans work on reconciliation and healing.

"I believe we took a very constructive and positive step," he asserted, noting that thanksgiving and prayer both were needed. "Thanksgiving that our two traditions have been led this far, and prayer that the Lord of the Church might give us the opportunity to witness more fully to the world—together."

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church.

99-146

Griswold joins church leaders in call for end to embargo of Iraq

by James Solheim

(ENS) Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold joined 23 other top American religious leaders in signing a letter to President Bill Clinton, asking him to lift the nine-year economic embargo of Iraq.

"We have long been deeply concerned by clear evidence that the embargo against Iraq is contributing to falling living standards and life expectancy," said the September 27 letter written by Bishop Craig Anderson, former dean of the General Seminary in New York and now head of St. Paul's School in New Hampshire. He is completing a two-year term as president of the National Council of Churches.

"By almost every measure—such as malnutrition, child mortality and overall morbidity—the situation of most Iraqi civilians has deteriorated markedly..." said the letter. It cited a United Nations report that concluded, "The gravity of the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people is indisputable and cannot be overstated."

Pointing to what it called "a deepening social and humanitarian crisis," the letter said, "The scale of this suffering requires a prompt, effective response." As a result of the sanctions imposed following the Gulf War, "the economy of Iraq has virtually collapsed."

Admitting that "the embargo is by no means the sole cause of the continuing suffering of the Iraqi people," the church leaders contended that the Iraqi government's callous responses to the needs of its people "do not relieve the international community of its responsibility to end the dreadful suffering caused by the embargo. The international community cannot pursue its legitimate goal of eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction by threatening the lives and livelihood of innocent people. Continuing to do so effectively punishes the Iraqi people for the misdeeds of an authoritarian regime over which they have no control."

The letter called for lifting "restrictions on normal trade in civilian goods" but "retaining appropriate political sanctions and a strict embargo on military-related items." It advocated "fresh thinking and new approaches" in dealing with Iraq's determination to "retain weapons of mass destruction." It underscored the goal of "establishing in the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction."

--James Solheim is director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church.

99-147

Relief agencies urge U.S. to press Sudan peace effort

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) Leaders of 11 humanitarian organizations working in Sudan or with refugees from the civil war there recently urged U.S. officials to pursue peace negotiations in that troubled region and offered their opinions on the role of the new special envoy to be sent there.

The group made its points during an hour-long meeting in Washington on September 15 with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and newly appointed Special Sudan Envoy Harry Johnston. Richard Parkins, director of Episcopal Migration Ministries, was among the 11, which also included heads of agencies ranging from CARE, Inc., and Lutheran World Relief to Oxfam America.

"The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the role of the special envoy and to press the administration to vigorously pursue the peace process," Parkins reported.

Group members told Albright they wanted Johnston to have a direct reporting relationship to her and to be accessible to the community of non-governmental organizations for input. Both Albright and Johnston agreed, Parkins said.

As for the peace process, Albright explained that the effort is being held back by the lack of strong allied support. She pointed to Egypt's reluctance to intervene in the affairs of a neighboring Muslim country and noted that European countries as well as Canada, have strong interests in oil reserves controlled by the Sudanese.

"The issue of these oil resources," Parkins said, "is critical as this provides funds for Khartoum to buy arms and strengthen its military position." It also obviously adds to the urgency of the peace process.

Assistant U.S. Secretary for Africa Susan Rice, who attended the meeting, asked the representatives present to press their European counterparts or church partners to intervene with their governments to support the U.S.'s peace initiative through EGAD, an African regional organization that is trying to negotiate a settlement.

Albright added that the absence of a NATO parallel in East Africa also is a serious limitation to a more proactive U.S. stance, Parkins said.

Johnston, a former Democratic Congressman from West Palm Beach, Florida, is a former board member of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, Parkins noted. He said Johnston, already on the job, shared his direct-line telephone number with the group and indicated a willingness to meet with it periodically.

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church.

99-148

Workshop prepares teams from Florida dioceses for ministry in crises

by Mary W. Cox

(ENS) What if Hurricane Floyd had come ashore on the Florida coast? What if a massacre like the shooting in Littleton, Colorado, or a terrorist act like the Oklahoma City bombing happened in your community? Or suppose the trauma is on a smaller scale—a rector accused of misconduct, a parish leader's family involved in an automobile accident, the suicide of a youth group member? How can our church provide pastoral ministry in such situations?

Fifty-five people from the dioceses of Florida, Central Florida, Southeast, and Southwest Florida gathered at the Canterbury Conference Center in Oviedo, Florida, September 10-12 for training in Traumatic Stress Management. The vision of the four dioceses is to develop diocesan-level response teams, members of which will be part of a state-wide team prepared to provide pastoral care and support to congregations and communities dealing with trauma.

Facilitators for the workshop were: James Horn, retired FBI Critical Incident Response Specialist, a Methodist layman who initiated the FBI's Advanced Peer Support Program and the FBI Chaplains Program; and Christine Prietsch of Professional Guidance Associates, who recently began working in private practice after 22 years with the Federal Government. Prietsch, an active Episcopalian, established the Peer Support Program for the Secret Service, and as Deputy Director of the Justice Department's Employee Assistance Program, coordinated the department's response to the Oklahoma City bombing.

Horn and Prietsch both said they had previously conducted such training workshops only for law enforcement and government personnel, and were excited to be working with the church. "There is one organization in America that's everywhere, in every neighborhood," said Horn. "If the churches get trained in trauma response...we can really help the people who are going through these things."

Warnings of stress

The workshop began with a discussion of stress—what causes stress, what helps to relieve stress, how to recognize the signs of stress in ourselves. “Change is stress,” said Prietsch. “We are making more decisions in a day than our grandparents made in a year.”

Stress warnings, she said, are manifested in emotional, physical or behavioral ways. A person under severe stress for too long a time will become physically ill, mentally ill, violent or suicidal. Recognizing signs of stress and knowing how to relieve it—with such methods as meditation, exercise, rest, and the support of a peer group—make it less likely that someone involved in trauma response will suffer burn-out or “compassion fatigue.”

Referring frequently to their own experiences in working with the survivors of the Oklahoma City bombing and other traumatic events, Horn and Prietsch continued with presentations on human responses to trauma. Trauma, they explained, is not simply the facts of an event, but what the facts generate in the minds of persons experiencing the event. Real trauma is not what happened, but what they imagined happened.

They emphasized the importance of validating feelings after a traumatic event, of giving survivors permission to express their feelings of grief, anger, fear or confusion—permission to cry. Quoting Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl, they told the group, “Abnormal reactions to abnormal situations are normal.”

Only a beginning

In discussions that followed, workshop participants shared candidly some of their personal experiences of trauma and loss, as well as incidents in which they had been involved in ministry with trauma survivors.

Other topics presented included post traumatic stress disorder, the grieving process, death notification, communication and listening, overcoming adversity, forgiveness and crisis intervention.

“Never waste a disaster or a tragedy,” Horn repeated several times during the workshop. “We have to make something good come out of it.” Giving survivors a place to talk about what’s happened to them can help them discover what they’ve learned and begin to integrate the experience into their lives.

The workshop ended with an unexpectedly dramatic role-playing of a Critical Incident Debriefing, the intensity of what participants had felt was as evident as what they had learned.

As he thanked participants, Canon Ernest L. Bennett of Central Florida, one of the organizers of the workshop, said that representatives from each diocese’s Pastoral Response Team will meet together again in November. “One of the exciting things,” he added, “is that we could work together in the event of a major disaster. This is only a beginning.”

Bennett then thanked Horn and Prietsch, telling them, “You’ve not only given us some invaluable tools—you’ve given us yourselves.”

Prietsch responded, “My reasons are selfish—you’ll be there for me, as an Episcopalian, if, God forbid, I need it.”

—Mary Cox is acting communications coordinator for the Diocese of Southeast Florida.



news digest

99-141D

Bishops model new style of 'respectful conversation' in dealing with issues

(ENS) About 160 bishops of the Episcopal Church—joined by 140 spouses—met at a beach hotel on San Diego's Mission Bay for six days in mid-September and wrestled with skills for "respectful conversation" as a way of dealing with controversial issues.

"We hope we will become a community of wisdom rather than a body of reactions, seeing each other as carriers of wisdom," said Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold in an opening press conversation on September 16. Although the meeting was essentially closed, he said that it was "not meant to be secretive but to create a context in which people can speak frankly and deeply... to insure... graced conversation."

Bishop Charles Duvall of Central Gulf Coast pointed out that "spouses were incorporated into our lives more than ever before, lending their own wisdom and providing some helpful balance." He added that the interim meeting was intended to be "conversational, not legislative."

Under the general theme of "Jubilee Consciousness," sessions dealt with Patterns of Indebtedness, Re-ordering of Relationships, and Sexuality, Mutuality and Fidelity. Chaplains Margaret Bullitt-Jonas and Jim Fenhagen helped to explore the biblical aspects of the theme, using the Gospel of Luke.

Under the leadership of Eric Law of Vancouver, an author and consultant on multi-cultural issues, the bishops and spouses moved from an exercise intended to develop skills for "graceful conversation" to a series of presentations on international debt, racism and sexuality, followed by small group discussions.

A presentation on world debt by Tom Hart, director of the church's Office of Government Relations, was "very encouraging" because it showed how the resolutions from the 1998 Lambeth Conference of the world's Anglican bishops has affected United States policy, said Duvall.

Hart told the bishops that, since Lambeth, there has been "tremendous progress" on the issue. "A worldwide movement is working to address this unpayable debt under the banner of Jubilee 2000, and is now active in 60 countries." Episcopalians have joined 40 other religious and development organizations to create Jubilee 2000 in the USA and "develop legislation to translate the vision of Jubilee into public policy." And the church's Peace and Justice Ministries program has created a booklet for congregational use on how they might participate in the Jubilee celebration.

Racism exposes raw nerve

According to Duvall and Knudsen, who served as press briefing officers for the meeting, the session on racism hit some very raw nerves. Bishops and spouses shared their own "moving, sad, almost angry" testimonies, Duvall said.

"They spoke of present as well as past experiences, in some cases with other members of the House," dealing with ethnically insensitive comments, added Knudsen. "It touched a chord of anger." Among the stories was one of shabby treatment by the wives of the church's black bishops when they visit white congregations.

"Illusions and complacency were smashed," added Duvall. And bishops set off some "alarms" in expressing concern about the loss of bishops of color and decreasing enrollment of ethnic minorities at seminaries. The bishops adopted a resolution to reaffirm the "personal and diocesan commitment" to fight racism "in all of its demonic forms and expressions."

Receiving a witness

A panel of three homosexuals—a man in a relationship, another in a marriage and a mother now in a committed relationship—shared stories of how they came to grips with their sexuality.

"It was a very moving day," said Duvall. "There was no debate or discussion, we were just receiving their witness," with small group discussions at lunch. The group then heard a "helpful presentation from two theologians who had a conversation in front of us, modeling respectful conversation," followed by small group discussion.

Duvall said that people in his small group admitted that it was the first time that they had discussed the issue in any depth. He said that Philip Turner, retired dean of Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, expressed his deep concern that "how the church deals with the sexuality issue presents the greatest possibility of schism we have faced in many years."

The speakers seemed to be saying, "Show us a better way," said Knudsen. She described a different spirit emerging from the discussion, not as confrontative, based on efforts to "de-politicize" issues and the atmosphere in which they are discussed.

"If we do not receive a model from this house that is beyond the fractious patterns of the past, then we are without leadership," Knudsen said. "It's not an issue of who is right or wrong but how we will live together." Duvall added, "No one was asked to give up their positions—just deal with issues differently."

In the day set aside for necessary business, the bishops elected the Rev. George Packard of New York as suffragan bishop for the Armed Forces after eight ballots in a close choice over the Rev. William Noble, who has been an assistant in the office. Assuming consents from standing committees, Packard will be consecrated February 12, 2000, at Washington National Cathedral.

During a report to the bishops on the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, its executive director, Sandra Swan, said that the fund "has been busy" responding to a spate of tornadoes, earthquakes, civil strife and floods. She said that she is "thrilled with the generosity of Episcopalians" in responding, pointing out that church members contributed over \$3 million to the victims of Hurricane Mitch. For the first time the Fund has launched a project in its own name, building 95 houses, a clinic and community service facility in Honduras.

Herb Gunn, president of Episcopal Communicators, said that partnership was the best model for the relationship between the bishops and the journalists who serve the church.

A new way of conversation

At a closing press conversation, bishops agreed that it had been an important meeting—and some credited the spouses with making a big difference. “The spouses humanized the meeting,” said Charles Bennison of Pennsylvania, making us “more willing to share our woundedness.” He is convinced that “a lot of surfaces have been scratched,” and that the bishops moved to “new levels of compassion, sympathy and reluctance to label people according to their camps has emerged.”

“That doesn’t mean that we have avoided differences,” added Chet Talton of Los Angeles. “We are not looking for easy answers but committed to continue the conversation until we come to a place where there is more of a consensus.” He said that an important “shift” had taken place at the meeting—“moving deeper into the issue of racism with more acknowledgement of our complicity in the whole dilemma.”

Knudsen expressed a hope that “the day of passionate confrontation is passing,” that it will be possible to “be together in differences, not sacrificing our convictions but simply calling them to be sources of richness, not fragmentation.” She pointed out that during Jubilee the land, as it lies fallow, is “extremely busy because, in nature, the system is kept alive by diversity.”

Looking ahead to General Convention, Griswold said he hoped that what bishops experienced at the meeting “may be useful dioceses, inviting people to see if what the bishops have learned could be used on the diocesan level.” -- **James Solheim**

99-142D

Hurricane Floyd’s victims dig out and dry out

(ENS) From the Caribbean to the Carolinas and beyond, millions have resumed their lives in the wake of Hurricane/Tropical Storm Floyd. With high winds and, worst of all, pounding and persistent rains, the storm soaked islands and then the East Coast in mid-September, leaving a legacy of death and injury, ruined homes and businesses, and despondence at so much lost.

And the rebuilding had barely begun when more rain—up to 8 inches—fell on North Carolina and tornadoes attacked the central part of the state on September 30.

Slowly, residents who were in the storms’ path have begun clearing out the mud, drying out the furniture and putting their lives back together. Clearly it will take years to rebuild what one powerful storm destroyed in a matter of days.

After gathering its strength at sea, Hurricane Floyd made landfall on September 14 in the Bahamas.

While Hurricane Floyd only brushed the coast of Florida it wreaked havoc in the Bahamas according to Archdeacon I. Ranfurly Brown of the Diocese of Nassau and the Bahamas.

“The eastern edge of the 700-island commonwealth was especially hard hit,” Brown told the Rev. Bob Libby during a visit to Miami, Florida. Communication between the bishop’s office and much of the island diocese was cut off for several days. When they were able to survey the damage, said Brown, “It was catastrophic in many places. The only good news was that there was, miraculously, no loss of life.

"We don't need food and we don't need clothing," stated Brown. "What we need is money, building materials and volunteers with building skills." The Bahamian government has temporarily lifted all import taxes on building materials and immigration restrictions on skilled workers.

After spreading damage across the Bahamas, Hurricane Floyd then slammed into the Carolinas, in the U.S.

Katerina Whitley, a North Carolina resident, reported that when Thursday morning, September 16, finally arrived after a night of fear, of wondering where the massive hurricane would strike, North Carolinians breathed a collective sigh of relief. Floyd hadn't packed Hurricane Fran's wallop (1996). Houses were standing. But further north the story was different.

The hundreds of creeks and streams of the east fed by the hardest rain in memory—20 inches in a couple of days—overflowed. Water spread on the cities of Kinston and Greenville, Rocky Mount and Tarboro, and roads became lakes. Cotton farms were covered, hog farms and enormous chicken sheds were invaded, and millions of animals drowned. Cars were swept away by the floodwaters.

E. T. Malone, Jr., spent time with several parishioners at Church of the Good Shepherd, Rocky Mount. Many told him they had escaped from their homes in predawn hours as Hurricane Floyd roared overhead on September 16, wading through chest-deep waters as the flooding Tar River covered their homes.

"We had to leave our house about 3:30 a.m. on Thursday," Cindy Peck recalled, "and go to the church for refuge." She and her husband and two teenaged children were among about 15 people who sought shelter at Good Shepherd, located in downtown Rocky Mount. "Some of our neighbors escaped in boats."

Southern Virginia, overall, was dealt a relatively small blow since the storm stayed mostly offshore and increased its forward speed as it moved northward, reported Carlyle Gravely of Newport News, Virginia. However, coastal parts of the state was lashed by 12 to 20 inches of rain and winds that gusted as high as 75 miles per hour.

In the city of Franklin and the adjacent Isle of Wight and Southampton Counties the Blackwater River rose at least 18 feet above flood stage. The entire downtown area of the city, including over 180 businesses and many homes, was flooded, sending several hundred people to evacuation centers.

Although it later was downgraded to a tropical storm, Hurricane Floyd moved steadily up the East Coast and ravaged areas of central New Jersey, causing the worst floods ever recorded, according to NevaRae Fox.

The hardest-hit communities were in Somerset County—Bound Brook, South Bound Brook, and Manville. The Rev. Hewitt Johnston, interim rector of St. Paul's Church, Bound Brook, reported that the church's location on higher ground helped—the water stopped one block from the church building.

He added, however, that rebuilding efforts were already under way. The first step was the formation of We Will Rebuild, Inc., he said, "an outgrowth of the faith community for people in Bound Brook, South Bound Brook, and Manville who cannot get help elsewhere."

Coleen Stevens-Porcher of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief stated that an account had been established by the fund to receive donations for aid to the victims of Hurricane Floyd and that an initial emergency grant of \$15,000 had been wired to the Bahamas to assist in assessing the damage.

Emergency grants of \$25,000 each also have been made to the Dioceses of North Carolina, East Carolina, Southern Virginia and New Jersey.

Persons who wish to donate to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief special fund for Hurricane Floyd victims should send contributions to the fund at P.O. Box 12043, Newark NJ 07101. Donations should be marked specifically for Hurricane Floyd relief.

For information regarding volunteer construction workers for the Diocese of Nassau and the Bahamas, contact Archdeacon I. Ranfurly Brown at (242) 322-3015-7.

—Kathryn McCormick

99-143D

Charleston of EDS issues statement on violence against homosexuals

by James Solheim

(ENS) Bishop Steven Charleston, the new president and dean of Episcopal Divinity School (EDS) in Massachusetts, has issued a statement deploring violence against homosexuals and calling for agreement on human rights for all.

In asking other bishops of the Anglican Communion to join him in signing what he is calling the Cambridge Accord (text in Newsfeatures section), Charleston acknowledged that "we may have contrasting views on the biblical, theological and moral issues surrounding homosexuality," but might agree on three crucial points:

That no homosexual person should ever be deprived of liberty, personal property or civil rights because of his or her sexual orientation.

That all acts of violence, oppression and degradation against homosexual persons are wrong and cannot be sanctioned by an appeal to the Christian faith.

That every human being is created equal in the eyes of God and therefore deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

In a covering letter, Charleston said that "the global persecution of homosexuals has reached alarming proportions." He cited hate crimes in the United States, and public statements by African leaders in Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe "vilifying homosexuals with a claim to justification through the Christian faith. In one instance," he added, "homosexuality has been declared a crime punishable by life imprisonment." The Anglican church is strong in the nations where homosexuality has become an issue and "their bishops need our support in resisting this kind of misuse of the Christian faith," said Charleston.

Calming the passions of hate

He pointed out that "our church has been equally in the limelight as a community of faith struggling with issues of homosexuality," raising the possibility that the church "perhaps inadvertently fanned the flames of some misguided and bigoted reaction. Therefore, the responsibility for us to calm the passions of hate become even more acute."

The Accord is "one effective way for us to make a shared witness, across all divisions of theological opinion, to stand united in our Anglican tradition of peace and the protection of human rights," Charleston concluded.

Copies of the Accord have been sent to the archbishop of Canterbury, the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, the primate of Canada and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, with an appeal that they assist in circulating it to Anglican bishops around the world. "If we are

successful with this simple effort, perhaps we can save innocent lives while the dialogue on homosexuality continues in peace and goodwill," he said.

The Rev. Brian Grieves, the church's peace and justice officer, noted the irony of the Anglican Consultative Council refusing to adopt a simple resolution from the Anglican Peace and Justice Network calling for human rights at its recent meeting in Scotland (see separate article). "Clearly, the resolution was not about an abstract issue but one that is life-and-death for many people all over the world," he said, "as represented by the threatening statements of some African leaders."

Charleston, former bishop of Alaska and chaplain at Trinity College in Connecticut, will be installed as president and dean October 15. --**James Solheim**

99-144D

Lutherans sorting out impact of vote for full communion with Episcopalians

(ENS) In the wake of the decision August 19 by the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) approving full communion with the Episcopal Church, the church's presiding bishop met with opponents of the agreement and addressed their concerns.

Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson told a September 27 meeting of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod fall theological conference in Rochester that the decision was a "calculated risk" and he expressed his concern that people on both sides of the issue have hurt each other. But he said that he hopes "that as a church, we can forgive each other."

Much of the controversy centers on the requirement that the Lutherans accept the "historic episcopate," with opponents charging that such a move compromises Lutheran identity, altering the role of bishops and diminishing the role of laity in the church.

"The passage of this places clergy and bishops at the center of this church," said the Rev. Julie Smith of Clarkfield, Minnesota. She said that "Called to Common Mission," rewrite of the Concordat that the ELCA narrowly rejected in 1997, is "a betrayal" of her Lutheran heritage, and puts the church on "a course of increased hierarchy and less concern for the priesthood of all believers."

Another pastor reported "a lot of hurt in the parish I serve." The Rev. David Christiansen of Hutchinson said, "People are angry to the point where they are drawing up resolutions asking, 'How can we stay in the ELCA?'"

Anderson said that no rule requires "anyone to accept the historic episcopate," and that it is important "to talk with people about their conscientious objections and see how they can be alleviated." He said that nothing in CCM changes the structure of the ELCA, only the procedure is changed.

Anderson pointed out that the Episcopal Church was making commitments of its own, including the acceptance of Lutheran ordinations and the suspension of its rules that "no persons are allowed to exercise the offices of bishop, priest or deacon" in the Episcopal Church unless they have been ordained by a bishop in the historic episcopate. Waiting for a response from the Episcopal Church next summer in Denver, Anderson said, "It is important for us now to meet concerns and to find a way to live into this new possibility."

In an earlier meeting at a church in St. Paul, Anderson responded to concerns from seminarians who wondered about the “nature of supervision” required by CCM.

Carol Nelson, a senior at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, said she wondered “if there is a place or need for me in this church.” In response Anderson said that he would do “all I can to help seminarians. I want them to know that this is a church that welcomes them.”

Other participants expressed “distrust” with ELCA leadership. And the Rev. Jonathan Preus of Minneapolis said that he was worried about what will happen to seminarians and congregations who cannot accept CCM. He even suggested that some congregations might consider forming a non-geographic synod “where the historic episcopate does not exist.”

Anderson said that he would be “attentive to those who found the decision to be distasteful,” adding that “part of the work I’m doing is to hear clearly what those issues are. We took on a big job,” he concluded. “This might be a way for us to learn how to live together.” --by James Solheim.

99-145D

Lutheran bishop offers praise, caution in wake of CCM vote

(ENS) Declaring that he is grateful that his church, after spirited debate, voted to enter into communion with the Episcopal Church, the head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America told an audience at Grace Episcopal Church in New York City that the ELCA’s experience over two years in full communion with the Reformed churches has taught it to expect a wealth of possibilities in the new relationship

“Jubilation is premature,” ELCA Presiding Bishop H. George Anderson cautioned, noting that the Episcopal Church must approve the agreement at its General Convention next summer, but for the ELCA, “full communion has proved to be much more than another step on the path of Christian unity. It is more like a whole new highway.”

Anderson’s remarks came as part of the William Reed Huntington Memorial Sermon, delivered on September 15 during an annual Eucharist honoring Huntington, rector of Grace Church at the turn of the last century. The church was filled despite a heavy rainstorm that had pelted the area for hours preceding the evening service.

In addition to his 26 years of service to Grace Church, Huntington was the architect of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, approved by the House of Bishops in 1886 and still in use as the declaration of the official ecumenical position of the Episcopal Church. The document’s listing of the historic episcopate as a necessary point to be included in the Episcopal Church’s approach to unity with other Christians, has long been at the heart of Lutheran-Episcopal discussions.

The Lutheran Churchwide Assembly agreed to join Episcopalians in the historic episcopate when it approved the document—“Called to Common Mission”(CCM)—that opened the way for full communion.

“Over the last two years, Lutherans and Episcopalians have been seeking a way to honor that element in your tradition,” Anderson said of the historic episcopate, “while also recognizing we Lutherans have no such structural requirement in our definition of Christian unity.”

Not bound to structure

He pointed to the variety of ways in which Lutherans have organized themselves, never seeing their identity as bound to any single structure.

"Church structure was not an issue," he said of the Lutherans' relationships with three churches of the Reformed tradition and, most recently, the Moravians. "Once we agreed on matters of faith, we were able to move forward with full communion.

"The road to full communion with the Episcopal Church has not been that easy, although most Lutherans would see our two traditions as holding much in common. That is even true on the distinction between essentials and non-essentials," Anderson said. Put simply, Episcopalians see the historic episcopate as essential to Christian unity; Lutherans do not.

Lutherans' doubts came through in their vote against adopting the original "Concordat of Agreement" approved overwhelmingly by Episcopalians in 1997, he said, although Lutherans asked that a revised proposal be presented at their 1999 assembly.

CCM "clarified the question of the necessity of the historic episcopate," he said. He quoted from the document:

"The Episcopal Church is free to maintain that sharing in the historic catholic episcopate, while not necessary for salvation or for recognition of another church as a church, is nonetheless necessary when Anglicans enter the relationship of full communion... The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is free to maintain that this same episcopate, although pastorally desirable when exercised in personal, collegial, and communal ways, is nonetheless not necessary for the relationship of full communion."

The ELCA's experience with full communion with Reformed churches "has been full of discoveries. Time after time we have discovered ways in which our ministries can complement and support each other," he declared. "Beforehand we had talked of supplying vacant parishes and sharing expertise, but now we are talking about specific cooperation in dozens of program areas."

Moreover, the work surrounding "Called to Common Mission" is not yet done, he added. Episcopalians must decide whether or not to accept it next summer, while Lutherans work on reconciliation and healing.

"I believe we took a very constructive and positive step," Anderson asserted, noting that thanksgiving and prayer both were needed. "Thanksgiving that our two traditions have been led this far, and prayer that the Lord of the Church might give us the opportunity to witness more fully to the world—together."--**Kathryn McCormick**

99-146D

Griswold joins church leaders in call to lift embargo of Iraq

(ENS) Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold joined 23 other top American religious leaders in signing a letter to President Bill Clinton, asking him to lift the nine-year economic embargo of Iraq.

"We have long been deeply concerned by clear evidence that the embargo against Iraq is contributing to falling living standards and life expectancy," said the September 27 letter written by Bishop Craig Anderson, former dean of the General Seminary in New York

and now head of St. Paul's School in New Hampshire. He is completing a two-year term as president of the National Council of Churches.

"By almost every measure—such as malnutrition, child mortality and overall morbidity—the situation of most Iraqi civilians has deteriorated markedly..." said the letter. It cited a United Nations report that concluded, "The gravity of the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people is indisputable and cannot be overstated."

Pointing to what it called "a deepening social and humanitarian crisis," the letter said, "The scale of this suffering requires a prompt, effective response." As a result of the sanctions imposed following the Gulf War, "the economy of Iraq has virtually collapsed."

Admitting that "the embargo is by no means the sole cause of the continuing suffering of the Iraqi people," the church leaders contended that the Iraqi government's callous response to the needs of its people "do not relieve the international community of its responsibility to end the dreadful suffering caused by the embargo. The international community cannot pursue its legitimate goal of eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction by threatening the lives and livelihood of innocent people. Continuing to do so effectively punishes the Iraqi people for the misdeeds of an authoritarian regime over which they have no control."

The letter called for lifting "restrictions on normal trade in civilian goods" but "retaining appropriate political sanctions and a strict embargo on military-related items." It advocated "fresh thinking and new approaches" in dealing with Iraq's determination to "retain weapons of mass destruction." It underscored the goal of "establishing in the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction." --James Solheim

99-147D

Relief agencies urge U.S. to press Sudan peace effort

(ENS) Leaders of 11 humanitarian organizations working in Sudan or with refugees from the civil war there recently urged U.S. officials to pursue peace negotiations in that troubled region and offered their opinions on the role of the new special envoy to be sent there.

The group made its points during an hour-long meeting in Washington on September 15 with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and newly appointed Special Sudan Envoy Harry Johnston. Richard Parkins, director of Episcopal Migration Ministries, was among the 11, which also included heads of agencies ranging from CARE, Inc., and Lutheran World Relief to Oxfam America.

"The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the role of the special envoy and to press the administration to vigorously pursue the peace process," Parkins reported.

Group members told Albright they wanted Johnston to have a direct reporting relationship to her and to be accessible to the community of nongovernmental organizations for input. Both Albright and Johnston agreed, Parkins said.

As for the peace process, Albright explained that the effort is being held back by the lack of strong allied support. She pointed to Egypt's reluctance to intervene in the affairs of a neighboring Muslim country and noted that European countries as well as Canada have strong interests in oil reserves controlled by the Sudanese in Khartoum.

"The issue of these oil resources," Parkins said, "is critical as this provides funds for Khartoum to buy arms and strengthen its military position." It also obviously adds to the urgency of the peace process.

Assistant U.S. Secretary for Africa Susan Rice, who attended the meeting, asked the representatives present to press their European counterparts or church partners to intervene with their governments to support the U.S.'s peace initiative through EGAD, an African regional organization that is trying to negotiate a settlement.

Johnston, a former Democratic Congressman from West Palm Beach, Florida, is a former board member of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, Parkins noted. He said Johnston, already on the job, shared his direct-line telephone number with the group and indicated a willingness to meet with it periodically. --**Kathryn McCormick**

99-148D

Workshop prepares teams from Florida dioceses for ministry in crises

(ENS) What if Hurricane Floyd had come ashore on the Florida coast? What if a massacre like the shooting in Littleton, Colorado, or a terrorist act like the Oklahoma City bombing happened in your community? Or suppose the trauma is on a smaller scale—a rector accused of misconduct, a parish leader's family involved in an automobile accident, the suicide of a youth group member? How can our church provide pastoral ministry in such situations?

Fifty-five people from the dioceses of Florida, Central Florida, Southeast, and Southwest Florida gathered at the Canterbury Conference Center in Oviedo, Florida, September 10-12, for training in Traumatic Stress Management. The vision of the four dioceses is to develop diocesan-level response teams, members of which will be part of a state-wide team prepared to provide pastoral care and support to congregations and communities dealing with trauma.

Facilitators for the workshop were: James Horn, retired FBI Critical Incident Response Specialist, a Methodist layman who initiated the FBI's Advanced Peer Support Program and the FBI Chaplains Program; and Christine Prietsch of Professional Guidance Associates, who recently began working in private practice after 22 years with the Federal Government. Prietsch, an active Episcopalian, established the Peer Support Program for the Secret Service, and as Deputy Director of the Justice Department's Employee Assistance Program, coordinated the department's response to the Oklahoma City bombing.

Horn and Prietsch both said they had previously conducted such training workshops only for law enforcement and government personnel, and were excited to be working with the church. "There is one organization in America that's everywhere, in every neighborhood," said Horn. "If the churches get trained in trauma response...we can really help the people who are going through these things."

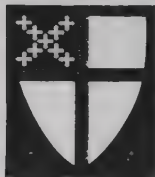
The workshop began with a discussion of stress—what causes stress, what helps to relieve stress, how to recognize the signs of stress in ourselves. "Change is stress," said Prietsch. "We are making more decisions in a day than our grandparents made in a year."

Stress warnings, she said, are manifested in emotional, physical or behavioral ways. A person under severe stress for too long a time will become physically ill, mentally ill,

violent or suicidal. Recognizing signs of stress and knowing how to relieve it—with such methods as meditation, exercise, rest, and the support of a peer group—make it less likely that someone involved in trauma response will suffer burn-out or “compassion fatigue.”

They emphasized the importance of validating feelings after a traumatic event, of giving survivors permission to express their feelings of grief, anger, fear or confusion—permission to cry. Quoting Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl, they told the group, “Abnormal reactions to abnormal situations are normal.

“Never waste a disaster or a tragedy,” Horn repeated several times during the workshop. “We have to make something good come out of it.” Giving survivors a place to talk about what’s happened to them can help them discover what they’ve learned and begin to integrate the experience into their lives. —**Mary Cox**



news briefs

99-149

Priest at center of heresy controversy resigns his parish

(ENS) The Rev. Barry Stopfel, whose ordination to the diaconate as an openly gay man living in a relationship precipitated a heresy trial, has resigned from his parish.

While calling his 10 years in ministry, the last six at a thriving New Jersey parish, "deeply gratifying but very stressful," he said that it had strained his relationship with his partner, the Rev. Will Leckie. The couple has moved to a farm and orchard in the Amish countryside in Pennsylvania.

Stopfel said that he will write a new book, following a previous book he and Leckie wrote, "Courage to Love." This one will deal with the spiritual quest of people who have been disenchanted with organized religion.

Parishioners at St. George's Church in Maplewood expressed disappointment and sadness but some said that they had welcomed homosexuals before Stopfel became their rector and would continue to do so in the future. One long-time member admitted that there were some difficult moments. "The church pulled together and was supportive of Barry and gay rights," said Tilly-Jo Emerson. "Yet we paid a price from constantly having to respond to the ugliness out there," she told a local reporter.

Stopfel said that the parish had a reputation for welcoming everyone. "Among gays and non-gays St. George's has become an icon, representing the circle of God's love that includes everyone."

Stopfel was ordained a deacon by Bishop Walter Righter, who was then accused of heresy and the charges went to the court for the trial of a bishop. The court decided that the ordination did not violate any core doctrine of the church.

Some of the trauma from the trial still lingers, Stopfel said in a press interview. "For queers, hate is a day-to-day business," he said. "It is more hurtful when it comes from an institution that is supposed to represent God's love."

He said that he reached his decision after a short sabbatical at his farm, finally coming to grips with the toll on his "psyche and spirit." He told the *Newark Star-Ledger*, "Will and I lived our relationship publicly from the very beginning, which is something a rector and spouse do without all the media. I felt it was time to not live so much in public."

Stopfel said that he might explore some other ways of ministering outside of the traditional parish—perhaps reaching out to those who have left the church because of its inability to handle their concerns and questions on a whole range of spiritual and social issues. "I want to start an independent ministry for people with serious questions, who want to find a spiritual path," he told a reporter. "I believe the Episcopal Church has the elasticity to do that."

Cape Town will host century's last great inter-faith event

(ENI) Table Mountain, in Cape Town, South Africa, will be the gathering place, from December 1 to 8, for nearly 8,000 spiritual and religious leaders from around the world who will participate in the Parliament of the World's Religions.

According to the organizers, the Chicago-based Council for a Parliament of World Religions (CPWR), the gathering will be more than a scholarly inter-religious dialogue, it will also be a celebration and joyful sharing of different faiths by salt-of-the-earth, grass-roots believers. It would offer "countless opportunities for discovery and inquiry, enabling participants to meet their own and others' traditions at deeper levels. Participants will encounter others whose practice, work and commitment can enrich their own."

Among the many religious leaders expected to attend are: the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists world-wide; Dr. Abdullah Omar Nasseef of Saudi Arabia, president of the World Muslim Congress; Sir Sigmund Sternberg of London, from the International Conference of Christians and Jews; Maha Ghosananda, Supreme Patriarch of Cambodia Buddhism; Master Hsyng Yun of Taiwan, founder of the Fo Kuang Shan Buddhist Order; Christian theologian Hans Kung from Germany, principal author of the 1993 Parliament document, *Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration*; renowned Hindu leader Swami Chidananda of India; and Christian feminist theologian Chung Hyun Kyung of South Korea.

Jane Kennedy, of CPWR in Cape Town, denied that this conglomeration of divergent beliefs would lead to syncretism. She also said the event would not only bring together theologians and academics, but also lay people. "We want to honor and fall in love with our differences, and see God in our differences. We will have a wide cross-section in Cape Town, so that the inter-faith gathering becomes a celebration of our diversity instead of a leveling out of our beliefs, a celebration instead of a fear of our differences."

The themes of the 1999 Parliament are "Encountering Religion and Spirituality," "Making Connections," "Calling for Creative Engagements" and "Offering Gifts of Service."

Greek Orthodox Church in U.S. has new leader

(ENI) Archbishop Demetrios was enthroned on September 18, in a ceremony in New York, as the new leader of the Greek Orthodox Church of America.

Addressing an audience of more than 1,000 people, which included Hillary Rodham Clinton, leading New York political figures and heads of other U.S. churches, at the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Manhattan, Demetrios called on the Orthodox church in the United States to move beyond recent differences and controversies.

"Without fear or hesitation, we are invited, beloved brothers and sisters, to set aside any differences, misunderstanding or conflict that could create differences among us, distances that shake the unity and drive away the peace of God," he said.

Demetrios, former Metropolitan of Vresthena in Greece, has strong ties to the U.S., including teaching experience at Harvard University and at a Greek Orthodox seminary in the U.S. He was named in August to succeed Archbishop Spyridon, who had resigned earlier in the month, after a three-year tenure that was fraught with controversy over his time spent in Europe and not on developing his pastoral skills in the U.S.

According to reports, the controversy grew so bitter that some lay people talked openly of the establishment of a Greek Orthodox church in the U.S., independent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, to which the archdiocese belongs.

Greek Orthodox American Leaders (GOAL), the lay group that led opposition to Spyridon, declared that the "crisis of governance" within the church had been resolved and that GOAL was now being disbanded, its goals "miraculously accomplished."

In a statement, GOAL's leaders said they were confident that Demetrios would, among other things, "exercise ecclesial authority properly" and "enhance our Orthodox witness in America." "We feel confident that he will be a good and faithful steward of our archdiocese."

Archbishop Iakovos, Spyridon's predecessor, who led the archdiocese for more than three decades before retiring, participated in the enthronement ceremony by passing Demetrios the gold staff that symbolizes his authority as archbishop.

Monks fear tourists will be tempted to site where Jesus withstood Satan

(ENI) To the dismay of monks at the Greek Orthodox Monastery of Temptation, the site that according to ancient Christian history Jesus resisted the temptation of Satan is about to become a major tourist attraction.

According to a report, for \$8 a cable car, able to transport 625 visitors a hour, will travel five minutes to a point alongside the monks' sanctuary, which overlooks the entire Jericho area. The developers hope that pilgrims will prefer this fast option to the walking path, which takes about 30 minutes. And unlike Jesus, who, according to the gospels of Mark (1: 13), Matthew (4: 1-11) and Luke (4: 1-13) fasted for 40 days before or during the encounter with the Devil, visitors will be able to feast in two restaurants serving Arab-French cuisine. One restaurant is at the base of the mountain and the other is built into the side of the mountain, adjacent to a series of ancient caves, where Christian hermits lived from the 12th to the 14th centuries.

The monastery's three resident monks remain hospitable, but feel increasingly under siege as they prepare for a record number of tourists.

Ahillios, one of the monks, said that putting in the cable car meant that everything would change. "It is good for the Palestinian economy, but we must keep the holy places. A monastery is a monastery," he said, adding that the emphasis on monastic life was at risk. "I don't want to say more about this."

For many years the monks have been serving refreshments to handfuls of grateful pilgrims who have made the trek, often in the searing heat of summer. But if the cable car operates at full capacity, the monks will be receiving countless more visitors.

Tourists will also be able to stay overnight at a three-star hotel, next to the base station of the cable car, and buy handicrafts from a series of souvenir shops.

The owners, the Snukeret family of Hebron, have put about \$10 million into the project. One monk, who has lived at the monastery for 15 years, told the family that if Jesus had climbed the mountain path 2000 years ago, then tourists could do the same.

Ziegfreid Reidmann, a German Lutheran pilgrim to the mount, said that the development would be welcomed by visitors who now had easier access to the site. But, he added, it would also shatter quiet contemplation for resident monks. The whole development in the future will go in the direction of Disneyland and tourist attractions, and so it goes further away from the original story, as it happened to Jesus," he said.

Old Catholic Church ordains first Dutch woman priest

(ENI) The Netherlands' first woman priest was ordained on September 18. Grete Verhey-de Jager, was ordained in the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht by Archbishop Antonius-Jan Glazemaker.

"With women in office, I hope that there will be more integrity in the church, and also that ordinary churchgoers will relate more easily to the priest," said Verhey.

A report stated that Verhey's decision to seek ordination had not been her own. "The idea came from the people with whom I work daily," she said. Before being ordained, Verhey worked for the church in two small villages, Oudewater and Schoonhoven, and visited people in a local hospital.

The Old Catholic Church still has a special relationship with the Roman Catholic Church from which it broke away in the 18th century, and there is still partial recognition by the Vatican of the ordained clergy of the Old Catholic Church. However, Verhey said she expected the Vatican to declare her ordination invalid.

In an interview, she agreed that her ordination could be a new obstacle to relations between her church and the Roman Catholic Church. But she added, "What is the aim of ecumenism? If you want to unite with the Roman Catholic Church, you may as well stop most ecumenical activities. If your aim is to learn from each other's traditions, to enrich each other and to work together on special occasions, then why would my ordination be an obstacle?"

Nonetheless, she has no ambitions to become a bishop. "My strength and my biggest interest at this moment are pastoral work," Verhey said.

As recently as 1976 the International Bishops' Conference (IBC) – uniting the leaders of the world's Old Catholic churches – declared that the priesthood would not be opened to women. But in 1982 the IBC decided that women could become deacons, the first step on the way to priestly ordination. Then the Old Catholic Church in Germany ordained women priests, followed by the Old Catholic churches in Austria and Switzerland.

U.S. Conference of WCC will focus on reconciliation

(WCC) One year after the World Council of Churches' (WCC) Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, the WCC's United States Conference will meet in Atlanta, Georgia, December 9 to 11 to weigh the Assembly's impact on the life and witness of U.S. churches.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in residence at Emory University in Atlanta, Professor Miroslav Volf of Yale Divinity School, and Dr. Marion Best, Canadian church leader, will either make presentations or lead discussions on the theme, "Reconciled in Christ: The Churches' Ministry of Reconciliation."

Konrad Raiser, WCC general secretary, will address the conference on the reconciling role of churches in a turbulent world and U.S. Conference board members, church leaders and WCC staff from Geneva, Switzerland, will lead workshops on the theme.

Highlights of the program will include the installation of the Rev. Kathryn Bannister, one of eight presidents of the WCC, as moderator of the U.S. Conference. Conferees will also visit the crypt of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was slated to address the Council's 1968 Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden, before he was assassinated.

For additional information contact: Philip E. Jenks, Communications Officer, U.S. Office, WCC 212-870-3193; Fax: 212-870-2528, E-Mail: WorldCoun@mail.wcc-coe.org

Argentina Protestants demand same rights as Catholics

(ENI) More than 200,000 Protestants took part in a march in Argentina on September 11 to urge the national government to pass a new law giving equal legal status to all denominations.

Currently, Protestant churches and non-Christian religious organizations are not officially recognized by the state. The only religious body with official status and the right to receive financial support from the government is the Roman Catholic Church.

The demonstration, which brought together all the nation's Protestant groupings, was organized by the new National Council of Evangelical Churches. The council was set up in 1996 and includes the Argentine Federation of Evangelical Churches (FAIE), representing mainline Protestant churches; the Association of Evangelical Churches in Argentina (ACIERA), representing mainly Baptist and Free Churches; and the Confederation of Pentecostal Churches.

"We believe this demonstration has been of great importance for our churches and also for Argentine society," said Emilio Monti, from the Methodist Church in Argentina. "It has shown that Protestant churches can come together and have one voice when demanding their rights. It has also shown that the renewal that is taking place in our churches throughout the country helps us to overcome old, denominational barriers and prejudices. We couldn't have dreamt of anything similar five years ago. But now we are ready to go on working in inter-denominational dialogue and in search of a common witness."

The gathering included scripture readings, songs, prayers, and a public reading of a document demanding a new law on Religious Entities. The document also addresses the concerns of the Protestant churches on issues ranging from corruption in government to violence on city streets.

Monti said that the protest would start a new dialogue with the authorities, the politicians and the press. "We know that after this expression of opinion, the Protestant churches will be taken into account by everybody. This is a great opportunity, but also a great challenge."

U.S. TV series lists 'top ten religion stories' of the millennium

(ENI) Spurred by what it calls "millennial fever," Religion and Ethics Newsweekly, a PBS program, compiled a list of what it describes as the top ten religion stories of the past 1,000 years.

Among the choices made were the split of Christianity into Eastern and Western branches; the Crusades; and Martin Luther's 95 Theses, a key event in the development of Protestantism. The 19th-century questioning of religious ideas by Charles Darwin and Karl Marx also made the list. Only one 20th century event, the Holocaust, was selected.

The program's presenter, Bob Abernethy, said the list, made by the staff of the series in consultation with scholars, included a heavy emphasis on Christianity and Europe. "It was that kind of millennium," he said, adding that the audience might very well find the list "arbitrary or just plain wrong."

Viewers were quick to post their suggestions on the program's web site, with several wishing the list had included mention of the development of the Baha'i faith. Another viewer added his suggestion that scholastic theology and Gregorian chant should have been included; another wondered why the Inquisition and the campaigns against Native Americans on the American frontier had been omitted.

Kurt Hendel, who teaches historical and systematic theology at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, said that it would be "difficult to argue with any of the 10 topics that were chosen," though the focus on Christianity and the West was an "obvious limitation."

He added, "I do see some important gaps, even as one focuses on Christian history and on the West," he said. "Perhaps the most important and lasting development of the Middle Ages, the great scholastic tradition, is not mentioned. Mysticism and particularly humanism are also ignored. The Enlightenment, which literally transformed the world view of the Western world, is not part of the list."

The list follows in chronological order: The Great Schism; The Crusades; The Spread of Islam; The Gutenberg Bible; Church support of art, music and intellectual life; Martin Luther's 95 Theses; Missionary movements; Religious Liberty; Challenges to religious ideas in the 19th century; and The Holocaust.

Bulgarian Orthodox Church 'to leave' CEC

(ENI) The Bulgarian Orthodox Church has announced that it is withdrawing from the Conference of European Churches (CEC), one of Europe's main inter-church bodies, which has more than 120 Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox members.

However, according to CEC's rules, the withdrawal will become effective only on December 28, six months after the receipt, of the official notification of the decision of the church to terminate its membership.

The news of the decision of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church became known during a September 21 to 26 CEC central committee meeting in Nyborg, Denmark.

According to a report, no reason for the resignation has been given, although the Bulgarian Orthodox Church last year also withdrew from membership of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

In recent years there has been increasing criticism from within Orthodox churches about the activities of ecumenical organizations, which are perceived by some as being too dominated by Protestant churches and overly influenced by liberal theological trends. In 1997, the Georgian Orthodox Church resigned from both the WCC and CEC. The situation in Bulgaria is also complicated by a continuing power struggle within the country's Orthodox Church, despite a recent agreement to patch up a split between two rival church leaderships.

CEC leaders hope that the six-month period before the resignation becomes effective will allow time for further discussions, and possibly a change of heart by the church. (Last year, the Baptist Union of the Czech Republic announced its resignation from CEC but then rescinded its decision within the six-month waiting period following discussions with CEC officials.)

Dr. Keith Clements, CEC's general secretary, said that the news from Bulgaria had been received with "great sadness, not least because many contacts continue with members of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church."

Asked whether CEC was facing a similar situation to that of the WCC, where representatives of Orthodox churches have called for major changes in the organization's structure and ethos, Clements said that these questions had not been raised "in the same way" within CEC.

"CEC has always been their organization from the beginning," Clements said during the meeting of the central committee, pointing out that the participation in CEC of Orthodox churches from eastern Europe went back to the earliest days of CEC's foundation in 1959,

unlike the situation in the WCC, where most Eastern Orthodox churches joined only after 1961, 13 years after the foundation of the WCC.

Anglicans welcome first Belizean women priests

(Anglican News) The Anglican community in Belize celebrated two historic events on May 15 at St. John's Cathedral with its first triple ordination and its first ordination of women priests.

Assisted by Anglican clergymen from all over the country, the Right Rev. Sylvestre Romero ordained Canstancio Apolonario Perez and Belizes' first two women priests, Lynda Carmita Moguel and Ilona Smiling.

Moguel was deacon in charge of St. Peter's Church in Orange Walk Town and assisted at All Saints Church in Belize City. She is executive director of the Association of Tertiary Level Institutions of Belize and president of the Mothers Union in the Diocese of Belize.

Smiling was deacon and assistant to the priest in charge of St. John's Cathedral and St. Mark's Hattieville. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in public administration from the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. She is an insurance consultant with G.A. Harrison Pilgrim Services in Belize City.

Perez is a trained teacher and principal of St. Luke's School in Lemonal in rural Belize District. He was deacon in charge of St. Luke's Church at Lemonal, St. Philip's at Willows Bank and St. Stephen's at Flowers Bank. He also served the congregation at Double Head Cabbage.

The newly ordained priests were the first to graduate from a four-year course at the Anglican Theological Institute in Belize City. They were the first to receive all of their advanced theological training in Belize.

Solo Flight breaking new ground for the Episcopal Church

(ENS) Solo Flight, the only national effort for single adults in the Episcopal Church, will turn 10 years old next year. Plans for a Distant Learning Leadership Training program, liaison with the Episcopal Network for Evangelism and a new Winterflight Conference were announced at the annual conference at Kanuga September 4 and 5.

Single people ranging in age from 23 to 80 came from 36 dioceses in the Episcopal Church to attend this year's conference, entitled "Single and Standing on Sacred Threshold." Participants spent four days in workshops, discussions, small groups, morning and evening chapel services, fellowship and listening to keynote presentations by several speakers.

Ted Mollegen, chair of the Episcopal Network for Evangelism, said he plans to introduce a proposal at the General Convention in Denver to fund the ministry of Solo Flight and provide a site per year until four additional sites exist in various parts of the country. "People who are struggling with being alone have an awful lot to offer other people. It is not just a single issue. It's a human issue. The church needs them."

For more information visit the Solo Flight web site at <http://home.earthlink.net/~singleministry>.

Anti-Christian violence on the rise in India

(Human Rights Watch) A September 30 report issued by Human Rights Watch stated the Indian government has failed to prevent increasing violence against Christians and is exploiting communal tensions for political ends. The 37-page report, *Politics by Other Means: Attacks Against Christians in India*, details violence against Christians in the months prior to the country's national parliamentary elections in September and October 1999, and in the months following electoral victory by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party, known as the BJP) in the state of Gujarat.

The report stated that attacks against Christians throughout the country have increased significantly since the BJP began its rule in March 1998. They include the killings of priests, the raping of nuns, and the physical destruction of Christian institutions, schools, churches, colleges, and cemeteries. Thousands of Christians have also been forced to convert to Hinduism. The report concludes that as with attacks against Muslims in 1992 and 1993, attacks against Christians are part of a concerted campaign of right-wing Hindu organizations, collectively called the *sangh parivar*, to promote or exploit communal clashes to increase their political power base. The movement is supported at the local level by militant groups who operate with impunity.

"Christians are the new scapegoat in India's political battles," said Smita Narula, author of the report and researcher for the Asia division of Human Rights Watch. "Without immediate and decisive action by the government, communal tensions will continue to be exploited for political and economic ends."

The Hindu organizations most responsible for violence against Christians are the Vishwa Hindu Panishad (World Hindu Council, VHP), the Bajrang Dal, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteer Corps, RSS). According to a former RSS member, these groups cannot be divorced from the ruling BJP party: "There is no difference between the BJP and RSS. BJP is the body. RSS is the soul, and the Bajrang Dal is the hands for beating."

The report documents patterns that are representative of attacks across India. These include the role of *sangh parivar* organizations and the local media in promoting anti-Christian propaganda.

Though eyewitnesses have identified politicians and local officials as participants in attacks, the state administration and Hindu nationalist leaders continue to portray the incidents as actions instigated by minority communities. The chief minister of Gujarat and BJP spokesmen have even blamed the violence on an "international conspiracy" to defame the political party. The Prime Minister has called for a national debate on conversions, signaling tacit justification for the motives underlying the attacks. The central and state governments continue to ignore the recommendations of the National Commission for Minorities.

Human Rights Watch called on the Indian government to meet its constitutional and international obligations to ensure that religious minorities may equally enjoy freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice, propagate and adopt religion. In particular, Indian officials should commit to taking steps to prevent further violence and end impunity for campaigns of violence and prosecute both state and private actors responsible for the attacks.

NOTE: The full text of the report is available online at
<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/indiachr>.

The password is smita.

IRD applauds *Touched By An Angel* and its sponsors

(ENS) "In one brief hour, CBS's *Touched By An Angel* ripped apart the shroud of silence that has concealed the gross human rights abuses taking place in Sudan," said Diane Knippers, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD). "It was a shocking and compelling television show, forcing millions of Americans to confront the grim reality of contemporary slavery and genocide, even as we move into the 21st Century."

The September 26 season premiere of the show told the fictional story of a U.S. senator who must choose between exposing the practice of slavery in Sudan or appeasing corporate campaign contributors with economic ties to Sudan.

Even before the show aired, it was criticized by Muslim activists as anti-Muslim propaganda. While the war in Sudan pits the National Islamic Front, which controls the government in the North, against the largely Christian and animist black Africans in the South, the show made no explicit mention of Islam or Christianity.

"Those who would defend the best in Islam might better spend their time challenging the Sudanese regime's abuse and distortion of Islam than to criticize *Touched By An Angel*'s expose' of human rights violations," Knippers said.

According to Faith McDonnell, IRD's Religious Liberty Associate, IRD has sent letters of appreciation to the chief executives of 23 *Touched By An Angel* sponsors, including the advertisers on the September 26 Sudan episode and has urged viewers to do the same. (A list of sponsors' names and addresses is available upon request.)

The IRD has constructed a web site to educate and mobilize *Touched By An Angel* viewers to work to end the atrocities in Sudan. "In just over a week, we've already had over 4,600 concerned citizens visit our new web site," said McDonnell. "Our goal is to mobilize Americans with the same question asked of Senator Kate Cooper (fictional character in the show) by her young son: 'What if you just do one good thing?' We are calling on Americans to make their 'one good thing' shattering the silence and defending the oppressed in Sudan." The IRD's Sudan web site is www.AngelsinSudan.com.

Women bishops report backs unity

(Southern Cross) It is only a matter of time before women become bishops in Australia, according to Dr. Muriel Porter, chair of the General Synod Working Group on Women Bishops.

Porter spoke about the recent interim report issued by the group which discusses the options and consequences of consecrating women to the level of bishop.

Written by the committee, the report outlines four options for allowing women to be made bishops. No option for barring women from the episcopate is raised.

Moore College lecturer, Dr. Robert Doyle, who prepared the theological background to option one, believes there is widespread but 'nuanced' support for women bishops in Australia. "There are a considerable number who want women bishops, but only if the whole church wants them. Then there are those who want women bishops no matter what the cost," he explained. "Some will not want them if there is no option for alternative episcopal oversight."

Porter emphasized the importance of bringing about this change 'gently and graciously'. "I'm not one who'll say 'all or nothing'," she said. "We are trying to find a way together whereby whatever happens is constructive."

The report highlights the importance of unity and inclusiveness. The needs of those who, out of conscience, object to women bishops are addressed in three of the four options discussed. Alternative episcopal oversight is provided in these cases.

The Diocese of Sydney Web Site can be found at www.anglicanmediasydney.asn.au and Southern Cross is available at www.anglicanmediasydney.asn.au/scn/scn.html

Two seminaries have long-standing relationship

(ENS) The recent decision of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to enter into full communion with the Episcopal Church affirms the long-standing relationship between two seminaries in Austin, Texas.

The Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest (LSPS) and the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest (ETSS) have long enjoyed the promises inherent in "Called to Mission," the document approved by the ELCA at its late August Churchwide Assembly in Denver. The two schools have been intertwined in theological education, community worship and student life for more than two decades. Heads of both theological institutions applauded the recent ELCA vote.

"The benefits of this cooperation far outweigh the liabilities some saw," said the Rev. August Wenzel, LSPS director, who attended the assembly. "We look forward to further blending our curriculum and our faculty with the Seminary of the Southwest."

"Lutheran and Episcopal churches need only to look at our history of shared teaching, learning and worship here in Austin to see what is possible," said the Very Rev. Durstan McDonald, dean of the Seminary of the Southwest. "The vote in Denver enhances the strong bond between our programs and opens up many exciting opportunities."

Lutheran and Episcopalian seminarians will be learning more about each other's liturgy, worship and prayer books. Seminarians will be educated in both denominations' theology and church structure.

"Called to Common Mission" retains the distinctiveness of ELCA and Episcopal churches. Each will honor the other's rites, including baptism and Holy Communion. It also paves the way for joint mission and worship, as well as the exchange of clergy. Episcopalians will vote on the "Called to Common Mission" document at their General Convention next summer in Denver.

Government and Anglican Church in Canada liable for sex abuse

(ENS) In a case with far-reaching implications, the Supreme Court of British Columbia has ruled that the Anglican Church of Canada and the Canadian government are "jointly liable" for sexual abuse at an Indian residential school in the early 1970s.

In a surprising twist, the court said in its August 31 judgment that the church "bears greater fault" because it covered up the abuse. As a result, "Assets are at risk at the national level and, possibly, in some of those dioceses in which schools were located, but we have little idea yet as to the extent of the risk," commented the Rev. Jim Boyles, general secretary of the church.

Boyles said that he was "disappointed" by the finding that allocated 60 percent of the direct liability to the church and the other 40 percent to the government, underscoring his belief that "it represents an inappropriate share of the government's liability." The church paid the plaintiff but held out the possibility of an appeal, based on its contention that the government was responsible for the assimilation policy and primarily responsible for the policy of the schools.

It was not clear, Boyles said, whether the Diocese of Cariboo, based in Kamloops, had the financial resources to meet its share of the obligation. It is a small diocese, with about 5,000 members in 17 parishes, only nine of them self-supporting.

The Anglican Church of Canada established a "healing fund" in 1991 as it embarked on a path of healing and reconciliation with aboriginal persons. In 1993 Archbishop Michael Peers, the church's primate, apologized on behalf of the church for its role in residential schools. "I accept and I confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools," he said at a national Native Convocation. "We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God.... On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I offer our apology."

The church has been named in more than 200 lawsuits filed in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, involving more than a thousand plaintiffs. Some are claiming sexual and physical abuse, others cultural deprivation or genocide.

Joslin of Central New York will move to Diocese of New Jersey

According to Bishop Clay Matthews of the Office of Pastoral Development, Bishop David Joslin of Central New York has agreed "to become the assisting bishop in the Diocese of New Jersey until such time as the diocese elects and consecrates a new bishop, sometime after September 30, 2001." Bishop Herbert Donovan has been serving as interim, following the resignation of Bishop Joe Doss. Pointing out that the diocese "has suffered intense divisions and needs someone with the skills and compassion that David has demonstrated over the past nine years in Central New York," Matthews said that, after a meeting with the Standing Committee in New Jersey, they entered into "a productive period of conversation which lead to an agreement that Bishop Joslin would resign his position as diocesan bishop in Central New York in order to be appointed assisting bishop of New Jersey." The move requires consent from the church's bishops and, if received, Joslin would assume his new position by February 1, 2000. Matthews assured the Standing Committee in Central New York that "the sacrifice which is being asked of you was not entered into lightly but with the confidence that your life together is well-defined and healthy." He expressed gratitude for that sacrifice and concluded, "Your generosity comes at a critical time in the life of the Diocese of New Jersey and is appreciated by all."



news features

99-150

Trinity teleconference looks at the Zacchaeus Report—and beyond

by Kathryn McCormick and Lindsay Hardin Freeman

(ENS) Episcopalians love their church, but they must work to make it grow, flourish and fully use the technology available to it in the 21st century, according to five speakers featured during “Roots and Wings,” Trinity Institute’s 30th annual national teleconference broadcast during the last week of September.

The conference, staged before an audience of more than 400 at Trinity Church in New York City, and beamed via satellite to about 10,000 persons at 197 downlink sites across the country, was a response to the report of the Zacchaeus Project, a year-long study of Episcopal identity.

Speakers included polling expert George Gallup, Jr., sociologists Donald Miller and Robert Wuthnow, publishing industry observer Phyllis Tickle and law professor and author Stephen Carter.

Their remarks were preceded by video portraits of four diverse congregations by documentary filmmaker James Ault. The churches, in Duluth, Minnesota, Hartford, Connecticut, Oxnard, California, and Charlotte, North Carolina, were examples of the creative and lively congregations described by many in the Zacchaeus Report.

“The Zacchaeus Project Report reveals that we cherish the vitality of our congregational life and, at the same time, it challenges us to broaden and stretch our vision and to see ourselves part of a larger community,” said Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold, preacher at a Eucharist at the beginning of the three-day conference on September 27.

He urged listeners each to rejoice in their congregation’s capacity to good work, but also to “offer your imagination, your passion and your gifts to the larger church through your diocese. Such a step requires asking what might we give instead of what do we get. It means discerning what is best done locally or nationally or in some other part of our larger Anglican household, it means being both critical and collaborative in every dimension of our ecclesial life.”

Griswold’s remarks went to the heart of one of the major conclusions arising from the Zacchaeus study of a cross-section of Episcopalians: Many saw their church life focused on their own lively parish and felt little connection with diocesan or national offices.

The other speakers during the Trinity conference, all Episcopalians, also reacted to that major finding in the report from the project, which was funded by the Episcopal Church

Foundation and released last June, but they offered their own visions of the church's work in the 21st century.

Focus on youth

Several cautioned that the church must focus on, and better support, its youth: others recommended an increasing use of small groups to foster closeness and support among members, and at least one, noting Episcopalians' apparent disenchantment with church hierarchy, suggested that they pare the hierarchy.

George Gallup, Jr., polling expert and chairman of the George H. Gallup International Institute in Princeton, New Jersey, strongly urged "an all-out commitment to youth."

"Youth programs in mainline churches are, with glorious exceptions, faltering or non-existent," he declared. Gallup survey data have confirmed a high level of fear, uncertainty and cynicism among teenagers, he said, adding "a very telling finding:" Only 13 percent of teens say that people their age are influenced 'a great deal' by religion, and that twice as many turn to themselves to answer the problems of life as turn to God—yet half of teens attend church weekly.

"Does this inconsistency not suggest how little impact churches are really having on the life of their young charges?" he asked.

He offered a 10-point list of steps, ranging from hiring youth leaders to allowing more time for youth ministries, that could help churches help their teenagers.

The church as a whole must also help its adult members grow, he continued. A powerful way to accomplish that is through small groups meeting for prayer and Bible study, which could lead to a needed renewal of spiritual discipline.

In addition, "The church of the next century," Gallup said, should be a church fully engaged in helping the hurting and those in need, not only providing a safe haven, but encouraging its members to move out of their comfort zones and reach people on the margins of society, as Jesus called us to do."

To that end, he continued, Episcopal churches could explore forming partnerships with civic organizations to solve community problems.

Double the market share

Donald Miller, professor of religion and executive director of the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California, recalled his exploration some years ago of "new paradigm" churches.

He grew to admire many of their shared characteristics, he said, including constant innovation in programs, an important role for the laity, few committee meetings and little hierarchy and a conviction that God is leading them—"and that where God leads, God will provide."

Another point, flying in the face of those who think that religion is a rational matter identified more with the head than with the rest of the senses, is that new paradigm churches see religion as "a full-bodied experience," he said.

"My current feeling is that we need to balance the scale, acknowledging the role of reason but also bringing the emotive and non-rational dimension fully into our understanding of religion," he said. Episcopalians might re-examine their liturgy and their own experience in it to find the "magic" that enables them to move beyond the everyday world into the realm of sacred time and space.

The bad news is that the Episcopal Church will continue to lose market share even if its losses are leveling out in terms of absolute numbers of members, he stated, pointing to the church's hierarchy, its slowness to respond quickly to cultural changes and its inability to hold its youth or encourage a new generation of young leaders.

But the church could grow, could double its market share—from 1 percent to 2 percent—in the next 25 years, he said.

In short, the Episcopal Church should stand ready to receive persons tired of contemporary styles of worship; who are seeking an alternative to the new-paradigm Christianity, which may seem simplistic; who are tired of the legalistic anti-intellectualism found in some churches; who, as Roman Catholics, have become alienated by their hierarchy's stand on issues ranging from women priests to abortion; or who, as gays and lesbian Christians, have found a sanctuary in the Episcopal Church.

He called on the church to be pro-active in claiming this growth by following its commitment to reason—i.e., develop think tanks addressing societal issues and exerting moral leadership in our nation; put more creative work into worship; and acknowledge that innovation comes at the grassroots level, which should prompt the church to decentralize its organizational functions.

From dwelling to seeking

In nearly a thousand interviews since the early 1990s, Robert Wuthnow said, he has learned that the spiritual lives of Americans have changed dramatically during the past half-century, from a sense of dwelling to a determined seeking.

Wuthnow, a professor of sociology at Princeton University and director of the university's Center for the Study of Religion, noted that the 1950s saw the apex of American church-building and church-going—up to 80 percent surveyed said they were church members. The 1960s and early '70s saw an urge for more freedom in society as well as church.

"As we now know, the church's membership declined by a quarter between the middle '60s and the 1980s," he said, explaining that some people rejected the innovation visible in the church, the church did a poor job of retaining its young people, and the fact that Episcopalians, better educated and more upscale than members of many other denominations, married later and had fewer children.

As the 1980s moved on, there grew an emphasis on spiritual and moral discipline, he said. Discipline, however, often meant acquiring a set of techniques for living a better spiritual life rather than a way of life itself.

Today, people are seeking alternatives to this kind of spiritual discipline.

"This is the spirituality of the 1990's—the spirituality of angel books, close encounters and near-death experiences," he said.

"In contrast with dwelling or seeking," he stated, "we might consider a spirituality that emphasizes practice." Wuthnow said he was focusing particularly on "devotional practices—the time people spend in prayer, meditation or otherwise reflecting on their relationship to God."

He noted that the Zacchaeus report found a pronounced shift in spirituality among Episcopalians, many of whom talked about being on spiritual journeys beyond merely being loyal to a religious tradition.

Spiritual practice can take many forms, he said, but prayer and meditation "often seems to spill into the rest of people's lives, especially in motivating them to be of greater service to others." The Episcopal Church would be stronger if more of its members tried this, he added.

The church as chrysalis

Author and editor Phyllis Tickle brought home to participants the vastness of the cultural seachange facing American millennial Christians.

The author of two dozen books of poetry, meditation, prayer, and drama, as well as contributing editor in religion for *Publishers Weekly*, Tickle traced several major events of the past half-century that have created the radical democratization of knowledge, talk about God and religion, and spirituality; and a culture in which the vast majority of twenty- and thirty-somethings say they care deeply about spirituality but less than a third think the church is helpful in that pursuit.

According to Tickle, the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) in 1939, and the sale of its "big book" through retail stores in 1957, marked not only the beginning of the self-help movement and the growth of the idea that spirituality and religion did not necessarily need to be the same thing, but also the beginning of the realization that books could become "portable pastors" containing information and wisdom heretofore reserved to pastors—with the added advantages of being both private and highly individualized.

Furthermore, she cited differences among the four generations—referred to by contemporary writers as "builders, boomers, busters, and blasters"—as marking a dramatic departure from the experience of other generational splits.

"While every generation has been in conflict with those on either side of it, the disjuncture between these four generations is much more serious" because each of them has experienced the world through dramatically different media and therefore processes information and develops its world views in different ways. "By the year 2010 twenty percent of the population will have their whole spiritual experience on the Internet," she said.

Also, with the exception of the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer, according to Tickle, American Protestantism has had "very few of the accoutrements of the interior religious life." But that, too, is changing as other churches begin to rebuild their worship around liturgy as it is found in the Prayer Book. The BCP "may be our gift to 21st century American Christianity," she said, noting the contributions already made by the BCP without most Episcopalians realizing it.

Which leaves, or presents, the Episcopal Church with an interesting self-image, that of the butterfly or chrysalis.

"In all of nature...there is only one creature that moves from the roots of the plants on which it first feeds, to a gestational period of secure, well-ordered definition, and finally on into the majesty of free flight... the larva, that becomes the chrysalis, that becomes the butterfly.... Only the encased chrysalis has simultaneously both the memory and consolation of its larval roots, and the hope and the obligation of its borning wings...American Anglicanism, on the eve of the millennium, is a holy organization, a holy organism, emerging from its chrysalis phase."

Cradle Episcopalian

The conference's final speaker, Stephen Carter, offered reflections from his life as a cradle Episcopalian.

Carter is a professor of law at Yale University and author of a number of books, including *The Culture of Disbelief*. He described his life in the church, calling his comments "a kind of love letter."

The son of Episcopalians—"which meant pretty much that they never went to church"—he nevertheless found a home at an Episcopal church, becoming an acolyte, but learning the role by rote, without any sense of history or Biblical tradition.

Tradition aside, the young boy whose home life at that time was unhappy, for whom school was not a life-giving place, the church became "a place of calm, security, belonging." Later, during high school, he was sent to live with a Jewish family, which saw that he got to

church on Sundays. As a young man, he recalled, he had trouble explaining to his new wife what made being an Episcopalian desirable.

He noted that the Episcopal Church had grown up with America, reflecting in numbers and practice all the confidence and chaos inherent in each century.

Suggesting that the activities and identity of the Episcopal Church have echoed struggles of secular society, Carter urged participants to stop worrying about membership numbers and to concentrate instead on "doing God's will."

"Too many pastors and preachers adjust their preaching in order to fill seats," he said. "We are called to live Christian lives. As long as we are doing what Christ wants, we can stop worrying about the numbers."

Carter affirmed two of his basic beliefs: that the Bible is the inspired word of God (everything is in the Bible because God wants it to be) and that God comes to our door demanding sacrifice while "Satan comes to our door giving promises that we don't have to sacrifice."

Dialogue, preferably skilled and loving and thoughtful is key, said Carter, but even in the tough issues such as abortion or divorce, God is always of one "perfect shining will." In any dispute, both sides aren't right. It cannot be that God has two rules, but it is essential that the two sides keep talking, keep debating, keep coming to the altar.

More teleconferences

Four additional teleconferences have been scheduled to examine the church at the millennium, beginning with "Exploring the Shifting Spiritual Landscape of America" on December 4, 1999. The 90-minute teleconference will bring together experts in sociology, theology and spiritual practice to take an in-depth look at our nation's spiritual landscape and its impact on congregational life today.

This is to be followed by "God at 2000" a two-day teleconference beginning February 11, 2000. Produced in partnership with Trinity Institute and Oregon State University, it will feature prominent religious thinkers of diverse faiths discussing their experience of God.

On March 15, 2000, Episcopal bishops from around the country will share their experiences and articulate their visions of the mission and future of the Episcopal Church in "I Have A Vision."

Finally, on May 13, 2000, is "Where Do We Go From Here?" A town hall gathering and Eucharist celebration, this broadcast will explore the issues and visions emerging from the nearly year-long study of the Zacchaeus Report and offer ideas on what lies ahead for the Episcopal Church.

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Office of News and Information of the Episcopal Church. The Rev. Lindsay Hardin Freeman is priest associate at St. Martin's-by-the-Lake Episcopal Church in Minnetonka Beach, Minnesota.

99-151

Anglican Consultative Council sifts through issues from Lambeth Conference

by James Solheim

(ENS) Some of the frustrations from the 1998 Lambeth Conference of the world's Anglican bishops spilled over to a meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in Scotland, as it spent a dozen days in mid September sorting through issues of unity, sexuality, international debt and globalization. The theme itself, "The Communion We Share," gave a clue to such continuing concerns.

Formed in 1968 to provide a forum to deal with pressing concerns of Anglicans worldwide, the ACC has no authority over the 38 provinces of the Anglican Communion.

In an unusually blunt presidential address, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said that Anglicans do not live by the principle of "anything goes," that "the constant interplay of Scripture, tradition and reason provide limits to diversity."

As Christians struggle to share their faith with the world around them, "vigorous debate and healthy intellectual engagement" are inevitable, he said. But he repudiated unilateral action by dioceses and provinces within the Anglican Communion.

"No one has the right to take decisions that affect the whole," he said, warning that "unilateral action which affects and impairs the whole communion...to engage in division is itself to undermine the truth."

Pointing to the absence of Archbishop Moses Tay of Southeast Asia, who was boycotting the meeting because it was being held in "one of the most heretical provinces" in the church, under the leadership of Primus Richard Holloway of Scotland, Carey said, "We are poorer without his voice." At the same time, the archbishop disagreed with the central thesis in Holloway's book, "Godless Morality," which suggests that God could be left out of the moral debate.

Holloway later said that he and Carey came from "very different theological traditions" and that "disagreement is central to the search for truth in complex areas, such as theology and ethics."

No change in composition of ACC

Efforts to increase the size of the ACC and make it more representative were rebuffed. The call to take a closer look at the composition of the ACC, regarded as one of the "instruments of unity" for the Anglican Communion, came from the last meeting of the ACC, in Panama in 1996, and from the Lambeth Conference which asked that the primate, a presbyter and person from each province be sent to ACC.

By a vote of 33 in favor and 28 against, the ACC chose not to make any changes. On the other hand, the ACC endorsed the idea of an Anglican Congress to be held in association with the next Lambeth Conference. It urged the archbishop of Canterbury to invite the diocesan bishop and four other persons, three of them laity, at least one a woman and one under the age of 28.

The Virginia Report, a theological exploration of the basis of unity in the Anglican Communion prepared for the Lambeth Conference, provoked some spirited debate at the ACC.

"It contains two contrasting trends, one which is centralizing and hierarchical, and another which is synodical and is characterized of life in all our provinces," said Dean John

Moses of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. He worried that the Virginia Report would be used as an instrument to increase the drift towards a curia or centralized authority for Anglicans.

Holloway said that the ACC was one of the few structured vehicles in Anglicanism that might resist the tendency in the report to increase the authority of the archbishop of Canterbury, the primates and the episcopate in general.

The discussion also provoked an impatience among some delegates who resented the navel-gazing when there were more pressing issues in the world. Archbishop Glauco Soares de Lima, primate of the Episcopal Church in Brazil, expressed his concern about the on-going colonialism between countries and churches in the North and the South. He said that the report "is a sign of a still-colonial mind, even in the structures described."

Michael Hare Duke, former bishop of St. Andrews, later called for Carey's resignation, charging that "he just did not have the steel to lead the church into the 21st century while things remained in such disarray." He was dismayed by the public row between Carey and Holloway and said that most of the ACC meeting "centered on the issue of authority, who calls the shots in the Communion, but this should not be the priority for a church when society is concerned about the survival of the planet and the genocide in Kosovo and East Timor."

Testimonies from gays and lesbians

In a meeting chaired by Holloway, ACC delegates listened—in closed session—"respectfully and attentively" to gays and lesbians.

The session was in response to a Lambeth Conference resolution "to listen to the stories of gay and lesbian people, and we are trying hard not to make it a divisive issue," said Archbishop John Paterson of Aotearoa/New Zealand, ACC vice president and chair of the planning committee.

While some complained that the five presentations all advocated acceptance of homosexuality and were therefore not representative, Bishop Richard Harries of Oxford called it "a very positive step forward in the church's dialogue on this issue." He called it "a genuine issue that everybody has to grapple with, although people might have different degrees of conviction... The only way forward is by genuine listening to people of all points of view."

Bishop Simon Chiwanga of Tanzania, chairman of the ACC, said that it was "a unique experience of testimony and witness" as gay and lesbian Christians "shared with us their own story and pilgrimage."

Chiwanga said in his statement, "The whole area of human sexuality is complex, personal and comes wrapped in cultural understandings," provoking "broad and diverse" reactions. He said that Carey, in consultation with Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold, "has initiated a consultation between bishops representing all shades of opinion within the Communion. The first gathering of the group will take place in November in New York."

"It will be a conversation where we will look at how we understand the Bible and hear what homosexuals are saying," said Carey. "There will be no time limit, it may take many years. We need to get the African bishops and their churches to discuss this and not be fearful of the issue."

Debate over sexuality erupted in response to the report of the Anglican Peace and Justice Network and a resolution that called for support of gay rights, introduced by the Rev. Sam Koshiishi of Japan. It was withdrawn. Bishop Michael Ingham of Canada protested the failure of the ACC to address this issue and called its hesitance a "shameful failure of nerve." He expressed dismay that Koshiishi was pressured to withdraw the motion. The network will

“consider the justice dimensions of the debate over homosexuality, in the hope of contributing to the dialogue called for in the Lambeth resolution.”

A proposal for network status for a mission and evangelism group sponsored by American conservatives was referred to the next ACC after several delegates expressed reservations. Moses suggested that recognizing the Network of Anglicans in Mission and Evangelism (NAME) would actually be setting up “a parallel structure” to work already being done by the ACC.

Keeping in step

On the last day of the meeting Carey returned to the issue of Anglican unity and authority. “We have to ask whether we are a federation of autonomous churches or an international communion which speaks with one voice. Whether we like it or not, political leaders and other church leaders look to the archbishop of Canterbury. Unless we speak together as primates and submit to one another in communion, we will lose the respect of other churches,” he said.

Carey concluded, “We must keep in step with one another. The moment the local steps out of line with the whole, the communion is threatened.” He opened the possibility that there might be times when he should be able to speak for the whole Anglican Communion on certain issues.

In other action, the ACC:

- resolved to strengthen its efforts and advocacy in favor of cancellation of the international debt of poor countries;
- encouraged a request for an Anglican Urban Network, asking for a report at ACC-12 on the “scope and viability” of a Faith in an Urban World Commission;
- affirmed the importance of the Office of Anglican Observer at the United Nations, stressing the importance of the church’s voice in the halls of political power;

--James Solheim is director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church. This article is based on news reports by Ian Douglas, James Rosenthal, Margaret Rogers and Manesseh Zindo at the ACC meeting.

99-139

Presiding Bishop’s Statement on East Timor

The unfolding tragedy in East Timor is yet another sad and agonizing example of the human family’s inability to live in harmony. So much divides us. The killing includes among its many victims the Reverend Francisco de Vasconcelos Ximenes, General Secretary of the Christian Church in East Timor, which is a partner of the Uniting Church in Australia. Please join me in prayer and take such action as your conscience dictates in response to this latest act of inhumanity. The Presiding Bishop’s Fund will gratefully receive offerings for the relief of the Timorese people.

I have received a letter from the Anglican Primate of Australia asking me to urge U.S. support and participation in a peacekeeping force. By way of this public comment, I join my voice, decisively so, to the call for our country and the international community to rush peacekeeping forces and aid into the midst of the genocide. I do so as I express

Photographs included in this issue of ENS:

1. House of Bishops welcomed to Diocese of San Diego (99-141)
2. House of Bishops meeting in San Diego models 'respectful conversation' (99-141)
3. House of Bishops meeting in San Diego, September 16-22 (99-141)
4. Bishops and spouses model 'graceful conversation' at San Diego meeting (99-141)
5. House of Bishops meets in San Diego, September 16-22 (99-141)
6. Bishops and spouses join congregation at Eucharist during meeting in San Diego (99-141)
7. Families seek shelter and safety from the North Carolina floods (99-142)
8. Trinity teleconference speakers join presiding bishop to answer audience's questions (99-150)
9. Eucharist opens Trinity Institute teleconference on future of Episcopal Church (99-150)

(All photos are also available in color)

The Episcopal News Service is available electronically. QUEST users can join the "Episcopal News Service" meeting to receive full versions of all stories. Web users can visit the official Episcopal Church web site at **www.ecusa.anglican.org/ens**

gratitude to the Administration for its urgent attention to this matter. I personally heard our ambassador to the United Nations last week express his own agony over this latest crisis and he assured those of us present that his office as well as those at the White House and State Department were fully engaged. Action and commitment by our government and the international community cannot move swiftly enough.

There will need to be reflection on this latest episode of genocide and the ways it might have been prevented. Also, the call by Roman Catholic Bishop Belo of East Timor for a tribunal to punish those responsible should be supported. But for this moment, all attention must be on providing protection and relief for the citizens of East Timor.

I grieve for the loss of life and incredible suffering from this latest act of loathsome brutality even as I proclaim Jesus as Lord who offers us all another way that calls us to be one as he and the Father are One.

Sincerely yours,

+ Frank T. Griswold

Frank T. Griswold
Presiding Bishop and Primate
September 14, 1999

99-152

The Cambridge Accord

In the name of God, we, the bishops of the Anglican Communion who have affixed our names to this Accord, publish it as a statement of our shared opinion in regard to all persons who are homosexual. We affirm that while we may have contrasting views on the Biblical, theological, and moral issues surrounding homosexuality, on these three points we are in one Accord:

- That no homosexual person should ever be deprived of liberty, personal property, or civil rights because of his or her sexual orientation.
- That all acts of violence, oppression, and degradation against homosexual persons are wrong and cannot be sanctioned by an appeal to the Christian faith.
- That every human being is created equal in the eyes of God and therefore deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

We appeal to people of good conscience from every nation and religious creed to join us in embracing this simple Accord as our global claim to human rights not only for homosexual men and women, but for all God's people.

Published October 1, 1999
Episcopal Divinity School
Cambridge, Massachusetts

All bishops who wish to add their names to the list of those affirming this Accord are invited to do so by simply contacting the President and Dean of Episcopal Divinity School, the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, at the following address:

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Steven T. Charleston

Steven T. Charleston
President and Dean
Episcopal Divinity School
September 14, 1999

The Cambridge Accord

In the name of God, we, the bishops of the Anglican Communion, affirm that the following is a statement of our shared conviction regarding the role of bishops in the Church. We affirm this role as a shared responsibility, one that is both spiritual and practical, and one that is rooted in the Gospel. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a visible sign of the unity of the Church, and to be a source of guidance and support for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a witness to the Gospel, and to be a source of inspiration and challenge for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a servant of the people, and to be a source of healing and reconciliation for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a steward of the Word, and to be a source of wisdom and discernment for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a shepherd of the flock, and to be a source of love and compassion for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a prophet to the people, and to be a source of courage and conviction for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a peacemaker for the people, and to be a source of hope and faith for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a witness to the Gospel, and to be a source of inspiration and challenge for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a servant of the people, and to be a source of healing and reconciliation for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a steward of the Word, and to be a source of wisdom and discernment for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a shepherd of the flock, and to be a source of love and compassion for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a prophet to the people, and to be a source of courage and conviction for the people of God. We affirm that the role of bishops is to be a peacemaker for the people, and to be a source of hope and faith for the people of God.

Episcopal Divinity School
September 14, 1999
Cambridge, Massachusetts



reviews and resources

99-153

"Religions of the World" premieres in October on Odyssey

On October 3, the Odyssey network premiered its multi-part series "Religions of the World," narrated by Academy Award-winning actor Ben Kingsley.

"Religions of the World," which explores world cultures and history through the examination of religion, was filmed in locations around the world, including Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East and North America, exploring cultural and world history through interviews with historians, examination of artifacts and dramatic reenactments. By exploring the differences and similarities among many major world religions, "Religions of the World" provides viewers with additional perspectives of understanding and beliefs.

Past episodes of "Religions of the World" have included examinations of Confucianism and Taoism, Judaism and Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity.

Upcoming episodes of "Religions of the World" include:

- **October 10** "Protestant Christianity": Since the sixteenth century, Christianity has flourished in a third form called Protestantism that developed in Western Europe. In the Protestant Reformation four major denominations emerged: Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and some radical extensions of these initial movements.
- **October 17** "Hinduism": Hinduism began in India about 1800 B.C.E. Several other religions and philosophies developed into Hinduism, including Buddhism and the Jain tradition (both 6th century B.C.E.) and the Sikh tradition (15th century C.E.)
- **October 24** "Buddhism": Buddhism began with Gotama the Buddha in the 6th century B.C.E. and has developed as two chief forms of practice: Theravada or (Hinayana) is found especially in Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand; Mahayana is found in Japan, China, Korea and Indochina. Zen, a more recent form of Buddhism is found throughout the world.
- **October 31** "Shinto and Japanese New Religions": The traditional religion known as Shinto has been present in Japan from prehistoric times, long before Buddhism and other traditions arrived from the Asian continent. This presentation also discusses this dynamic in Japanese religions which has arisen during the past century and a half.
- **November 7** "The Religion of Small Societies": "Primitive" religious practices and understandings - those without a surviving sacred literature - are recognized as equally as other religious beliefs. In this episode, the non-literate religions are compared to each other and to literate religions; they are also analyzed based on geographical concentration, historical development, and the type of religious concepts they embrace.
- **November 14** "Classical Religions and Myths of the Mediterranean Basin": Mesopotamia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Canaan, Greece, and Rome have greatly and continuously influenced all of Western culture and civilization. Today, theological interest is resurging in goddess worship, in mythologies and technical sciences from

Egypt and Mesopotamia. How literature and culture of these religions have influenced Hebrew and Christian scriptures is discussed.

- **November 22** "African and African American Religion": Many of the religious ideas and practices of African people have much in common with each other, and with related religions in the Caribbean and the Americas. African Islam and African Christianity have developed separately since the earliest times in Ethiopia, Egypt, and the Sudan.
- **November 28** "Native Religions of the Americas": North, Central and South American Indians have a rich religious heritage, though much has been lost as these peoples were conquered by Europeans.
- **December 5** "Skepticism and Religious Relativism": The long-standing doctrines of humanism, agnosticism, and atheism have increasingly challenged traditional religious doctrines or practices. Yet reason alone often fails to secure the commitments and values of a healthy personal communal life; spiritual and emotional life can diminish into nihilism and despair. Meanwhile, some theologians have challenged the "truth" of any religion with the view that all beliefs are equally valid. This episode explores how religious commitment can be reconciled with life in a rational, skeptical world.

The series will air Sundays at 4p.m. (ET) through December 1999.